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न लगायें।

पुस्तकालय विभाग

गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय, हरिद्वार
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MARK SPILKA*

On Lily Briscoe's Borrowed Grief: A Psycho-Literary Speculation

Four times during the conception, writing, and publishing of *To the Lighthouse* Virginia Woolf expressed in her diaries her fear of the book's sentimentality. Thus, on Monday, July 20, 1925, even before the actual writing had begun, she was arming herself against that hazard:

> The word "sentimental" sticks in my gizzard (I'll write it out of me in a story—Ann Watkins of New York is coming on Wednesday to enquire about my stories). But this theme may be sentimental; father and mother and child in the garden; the death; the sail to the Lighthouse. I think, though, that when I begin it I shall enrich it in all sorts of ways; thicken it; give it branches—roots which I do not perceive now. It might contain all characters boiled down; and childhood; and then this impersonal thing, which I'm dared to do by my friends, the flight of time and the consequent break of unity in my design. That passage . . . interests me very much. A new problem like that breaks fresh ground in one's mind; prevents the regular ruts.[1]

Diffusely anxious in this entry, she offers three solutions for sentimentality where one might do: she will expel it from her gizzard by writing another story, a kind of purging of emotions which now possess her; she will master it, in the novel itself, by enrichment, thickening, getting into the essentials of characterization and of childhood—the method which I. A. Richards prescribes, in *Practical Criticism*, of actualizing and disinfecting charged material by working it into a rich living context;[2] and, finally, she will overcome it by technical experiment—an impersonal passage on the flight of time—as if an aesthetic exercise of this kind might dissolve its potency or release its hold through distancing and novelty.

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[1] *A Writer's Diary*, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: Hogarth Press, 1975), 80-81. Hereafter *WD* in the text.

[2] *Practical Criticism* (New York: Harvest, 1929), p. 254.

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The second entry, on Sunday, September 5, 1926, comes near the end of the writing process:

> The lyric portions of *To the Lighthouse* are collected in the 10-year lapse and don't interfere with the text so much as usual. I feel as if it fetched its circle pretty completely this time; and I don't feel sure what the stock criticism will be. Sentimental? Victorian? (*WD* 100)

As the passage indicates, her old lyric manner now seems suspect; she has tried to confine it to the impersonal " Time Passes " section, as if by lyric uplift alone she might overshoot the sentimental hazards of the deaths she here by-passes, or at least might isolate them from the preceding and concluding sections which she identifies, interestingly, as " the text." By the fourth entry she will have even more severe doubts about this middle section. Meanwhile she is still diffusely afraid of being charged with Victorianism, or sentimentality, in dealing at all with the emotions of family life and childhood. Thus, a week later, on Monday, September 13, 1926, she repeats her dread of the theme itself:

> And this last lap, in the boat, is hard, because the material is not so rich as it was with Lily on the lawn. I am forced to be more direct and more intense. I am making more use of symbolism, I observe; and I go in dread of " sentimentality ". Is the whole theme open to that charge? But I doubt that any theme is in itself good or bad. It gives a chance to one's peculiar qualities—that's all. (*WD* 101)

The confession that she has *not* been so direct and intense with the richer material of Lily's liberating grief on the lawn, which enables her to complete her painting and have her " vision," is matter for *our* theme, if not hers: she has been avoiding the emotional hazards of her material by indirections when it is rich, by symbolism when it thins out and forces more direct confrontation. Her " peculiar qualities," her romantic soarings and polite evasions, continue to be as Victorian as she fears, though passed off here as the personal side of her impersonal artistry.

The fourth entry, on May 5, 1927, moves from the exultation of publication and sales to the old fear of reviewers:

> Book out. We have sold (I think) 1690 before publication—twice *Dalloway*. I write however in the shadow of the damp cloud of *The Times Lit. Sup*. review, which is an exact

> copy of the *J.'s R.*, *Mrs. Dalloway* review, gentlemanly, kindly, timid, praising beauty, doubting character, and leaving me moderately depressed. I am anxious about "Time Passes." Think the whole thing may be pronounced soft, shallow, insipid, sentimental. Yet, honestly, I don't much care; want to be let alone to ruminate. (*WD* 107)

She has been given the Victorian treatment by the *Times Literary Supplement* and, understandably, it rankles—enough so to move her to confess her fear that the "Time Passes" section, designed to avoid sentimentality through impersonalism, is in fact a soft, insipid, shallow specimen of that dread disease. And yet on Friday, January 14, 1927, on revising the completed manuscript for her husband Leonard to read, she had felt that it was "a hard muscular book"—that it had "not run out and gone flabby"—"which at this age proves that I have something in me" (*WD* 103).

Hard, muscular, unflabby. Was she as tough now as her mountain-climbing father, on whose character the book was originally supposed to center? Or was she as soft, insipid, and shallow as he sometimes saw her mother? One is reminded here of the somewhat different opposition in *Mrs. Dalloway* between "civilised" and "sentimental," those verbal touchstones which Peter Walsh bequeaths to Clarissa as daily guardians in a hostile world. Walsh probably derived those touchstones, along with other qualities (his obtuseness to the feelings of others, his unwarranted rages and emotional outpourings, his analytic probings and impossible demands), from that late-Victorian gentleman, Leslie Stephen, who also (whatever his own brutal rages) believed in civilized conduct in a godless world, and who also (whatever his own outpourings) "had no use for optimism, cant, gush, enthusiasm."[3] But Virginia Woolf had acquired her own "civilised" qualities—restraint, sympathy, unselfishness—from her hostessing years for her Victorian father,[4] and plainly she had absorbed his relatively dry brand of skepticism at an early age. Did she come armed, then, with his masculine weapons—hard impersonal muscular analytic artistry—as well as their civilized feminine complement—restraint, sympathy, unselfishness—in facing up to the dread sentimentality, the overwhelming feelings and the shameful things they shielded, of her own childhood attachments to both parents? Certainly the writing of this book would release her for a time, as we know, from her obsessive daily dealings with those watchful spectres (*WD* 138, *MB* 80). But would it wholly free her from things hidden by their sentimental shrouds?

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[3] Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography* (New York: Harvest, 1972), I, 8. Bell holds that Leslie Stephen followed his more manly older brother Fitzjames in this regard. See, however, his more natural inclinations as "a nervous, delicate boy, his mother's darling, fond of and over-excited by poetry, too sensitive to be able to endure an unhappy ending to a story," Bell, I. 7. Hereafter *QB* in the text.

[4] *Moments of Being*, ed. Jeanne Schulkind (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), p. 129. Hereafter *MB* in the text.

We can see from her own childhood recollections why her release was only partial, if much-needed and courageously achieved. Her portraits of her parents in Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay are as significant in their evasions and exclusions as in their confrontations. Indeed, the scene itself is not the Cornwall coastal town of her childhood, St. Ives, but the Isle of Skye in western Scotland, which she would not even visit until the summer of 1938, over ten years after completing the novel. The size of the Ramsay family is the same as her own, two parents and eight children, four boys and four girls: but they are children by the same two parents! The whole Victorian menage of children from three families—Leslie Stephen's retarded Laura from his first marriage to Minnie Thackeray; Julia Stephen's Stella, George, and Gerald from her first marriage to Herbert Duckworth; and Julia and Leslie's Vanessa, Thoby, Virginia, and Adrian from their own marriage—has been sacrificed for the sake of artistic economy; and by that strategic sacrifice the whole hothouse problem of predatory trifling by the Duckworth boys with their young half-sisters, with its lifelong damage to Virginia, has been avoided. So too has the source of Mrs. Ramsay's stoic atheism—her brave searching radiance in the face of suffering, death, the poor, unhappiness, treachery, unreason, disorder, injustice. Unlike Julia Stephen, she has no personal tragedy, no "perfect" first marriage ending in a husband's sudden death, no eight years of widowhood with three young children, to explain "the sternness at the heart of her beauty" which her fictive husband notes, and that saddening "remoteness" from himself and others which makes him feel unable to "protect her."[5] Then too, by leaving out the details of her mother's death, of her own subsequent breakdown, and of Stella Duckworth's death soon after, the funereal gloom and emotional distress which possessed and repossessed the family in "the 10-year lapse" is lost, and with it the substantiality and force of Leslie Stephen's most outlandish rages, his constant demands upon his daughters for attention and sympathy, and their own outraged sufferance of his tyranny.

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[5] *To the Lighthouse* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1927), p. 98. Hereafter *TTL* in the text.

Would the novel be improved by the inclusion of such family disasters? Or would their empirical densities and progressions produce a different kind of fiction? Certainly when Virginia Woolf turned to them in her most popular novel, *The Years* (1937), she produced a hopeless melange of family complications, a historical dreamfloat of lyric impressions and " cotton wool " realities, as she would later call them (*MB* 70). Of course, the material itself did not insure artistic success; and in any case she had legitimately chosen, in *To the Lighthouse*, to convey the essence rather than the substance of Victorianism, and did so with moving power. Still, the novel's depth as an elegy, its poignance as a grieving, its cathartic force as a release from childhood suffering, might have been increased by some fictive coping with these terrible events; some of its disguises and effusions might have been avoided; and its more dubious borrowings from the author's life might have been paid for in good fictive coin.

Consider in this light the odd placement of the artist, Lily Briscoe, whom Woolf modelled nominally upon her sister Vanessa but more substantially upon herself. Lily is 33 as the novel opens in mid-September, shortly before the first World War—a year or so older than Virginia was in the fall of 1913. She is cast as a friend of the Ramsay family, and in that sense, as " one of the family "; but her reactions to Mrs. Ramsay are those of an actual daughter. It is Lily, for instance, who grieves openly for Mrs. Ramsay near the novel's close, some ten years after her death—which would be in 1924, about the time Virginia Woolf conceived this novel. A spinster lady who likes to paint, who seems repelled by the very sexuality which attracts her, and who steadfastly resists Mrs. Ramsay's urgings that she should marry, she is—like the other characters—" boiled down " to such reactions. There is no attempt to account for them by the kind of sexual trifling the author endured in childhood and again in young adulthood; nor by the double messages about men and marriage which she then received, and which are here reduced to a social issue without much psychological depth. They receive no emotional reinforcement, moreover, from Mrs. Ramsay's death, as they obviously did for Virginia Woolf, for the immediate impact of that death is whisked away by " the flight of time."

The only other appropriate character who might have received that impact is the youngest daughter, Cam, who is seven when the novel begins. Virginia Woolf was about that age when she was manually violated by her 18-year-old half-brother, Gerald Duckworth, and so derived her lifelong sense of bodily shame (*MB* 67-69). Cam, more fortunately, is frightened only by a boar's skull at night, an uncle's gift which the children have nailed to the bedroom wall, over which her comforting mother throws a disguising shawl and around which she weaves beautiful images—" it was like a bird's nest; it was like a beautiful mountain . . . with valleys and flowers and bells ringing and birds singing and little goats and antelopes and . . . everything lovely " (*TTL* 172)—until she gradually falls asleep. There is some poignance here in the greater sternness of Julia Stephen's last words to Virginia, which one of these phrases echoes: " Hold yourself straight, my little Goat " (*MB* 84)—as if it were up to her to meet boars bravely, without maternal comfort, in the years to come. Cam is more swathingly protected, then, against the " great horns " of approaching death, and perhaps also of defiling sexuality; she feels no need to grieve, some ten years later, when she takes the trip to the Lighthouse with her father and is preoccupied instead with *his* death-defying ways. But Virginia Woolf did feel the need to grieve, and through Lily Briscoe (to whom she gives no psychic history) she tried to meet it bravely enough for most human purposes, in her own belated way—the way of therapeutic elegy—but with all the main chords muted.

Or perhaps all but one. The " centrality " of Mrs. Ramsay, her " general presence " as the center of family life, is very much the novel's subject. As noted, Virginia Woolf's initial impulse had been to center the book on her father's character; but her governing image of him " sitting in a boat, reciting We perished, each alone, while he crushes a dying mackerel " (*WD* 77), threatened to reduce his stoic posing to sentimental viciousness by the novel's end. She would nonetheless " have father's character done complete " in the novel, and almost as an after-thought, " mother's " (*WD* 76). The case for her greater concern with her father is an old one, much abetted by Quentin Bell's recent biography, with its early account of Virginia jumping about naked in the bathroom with her sister Vanessa, asking her which parent she liked best, and, when Vanessa promptly said her mother, deciding "after much delay and deliberation . . . that she preferred her father " (*QB* I, 26). One gains the impression from this unexamined anecdote that Vanessa's forthright answer must have stopped Virginia cold. In her self-defeating childhood lottery, her father was the only parent left to prefer; as indeed he was when he outlived her mother and her delayed (and perhaps unwanted) preference was further overlaid by circumstance. She would of course emulate him in her career, especially in her critical writing, and as we have just speculated, in her desire for tough unsentimental muscular effects in her fiction. But the strength to emulate him came, as I hope now to show, from Julia Stephen, and the awareness of his tyrannical nature came from Julia too, as did the ability to love him whenever he showed himself capable of loving anyone else except his mackerel-crushing self.

It was to Julia Stephen, then, that Virginia turned in the actual writing of the novel, giving her the inner fullness she could not imagine for her father, endowing her character rather than his with mystery, richness, creativity, and making her empathetic desire to send presents to the Lighthouse the novel's moving impulse. Her prototype, Mrs. Ramsay, has more interiority and more substance than any other character, including the appreciative and critical Miss Briscoe who must learn to grieve her before she can "want" Mr. Ramsay as the novel ends. It is Mrs. Ramsay, Lily thinks, who holds the secret of life, in whose mind and heart "tablets bearing sacred inscriptions" might be found which "would teach one everything" (*TTL* 78-79); it is she whom Lily must learn to love if she too is to have her vision of "life itself."

Interestingly, Mrs. Ramsay does not stand in any fundamental opposition to her husband as to the nature of life, as some critics hold, but only in how to respond to it. Both husband and wife are stoic pessimists and stalwart copers with a godless world. If anything, she is more pessimistic than he in wanting to keep the children locked into the happy childhood world she makes for them and so denying the bleak future he cheerfully accepts (*TTL* 91). But where Ramsay sees himself as the failed but heroic leader of brave expeditions, the bold confronter of grim realities about which he is basically optimistic, she sees herself as a fount of supportive sympathy and reassurance, of empathetic appreciation and renewal, in a world of constantly impending tragedy. They need one another, moreover, if they are to fulfill their chosen roles; they depend on one another, in loving if excessive ways, to insure their complementary functions; and their intimacy is so great they sometimes "read" one another by their inverse meanings. Thus, if Ramsay is a draining and demanding egotist, and his wife is vain and self-destructive in her unselfish giving, she nevertheless depends on him as much for his grim reproofs to her pessimism (e.g. *TTL* 184) as he depends on her for sympathy as a fallen hero. The question, however, is not so much how they relate to each other, or even how they fare in their own lives, but what they have to give to their children—the heritage of the past which may be salvaged from their complementary natures as stranded voyagers. And here Mrs. Ramsay—who is emotionally and socially creative where he is merely effective in academic circles, a climber of mental mountains, a master of the philosophic alphabet up to the letter R—plainly has the most to offer.

At that point in the novel where Lily sits with her head in Mrs. Ramsay's lap, her arms around her knees, and wants above all unity, intimacy, oneness with this adored guardian of life's secret wisdom, we see the maternal sources of Mrs. Ramsay's power (*TTL* 78-79). The selfless oneness she promises is like that maternal sharing of the world's surrounding richness by which every life is or should be launched. It is like that feeling of " lying in a grape and seeing through a film of semi-transparent yellow " (*MB* 65) which Virginia Woolf so cherished in her childhood; a feeling then of womblike security and selfless rapture by which selfhood is initially nourished, and from which it may then develop toward confident independent being. The characters who come to Mrs. Ramsay for this enveloping maternal reassurance range from the eight children who deserve it as their birthright to the full complement of adult admirers who renew their sense of themselves at her nurturing fount. Only a few of these adult characters—Augustus Carmichael, William Bankes, and perhaps in retrospect, Lily Briscoe—partake of these healing waters with anything like consistent reciprocity and selfless exchange: for Mrs. Ramsay has few equals. Her children as indicated have the right to her renewing reassurances without equal return; but her husband, whose constant demands for sympathy and replenishment epitomize the usual adult tribute to her powers, does not. This is the problem with which the novel opens and which, I think, it never wholly solves.

The youngest child, James, wants to go to the Lighthouse on the following day, a wondrous expedition to which he has looked forward " for years and years, it seemed " (*TTL* 9). His mother says " Yes, of course, if it's fine tomorrow." His father says " it won't be fine." James then wants to kill his father with an axe or poker:

> Such were the extremes of emotion that Mr. Ramsay excited in his children's breasts by his mere presence; standing, as now, lean as a knife, narrow as the blade of one, grinning sarcastically, not only with the pleasure of disillusioning his son

> and casting ridicule upon his wife, who was ten thousand times better in every way than he was (James thought), but also with some secret conceit at his own accuracy of judgment. (*TTL* 10)

As the passage makes clear, the problem is not what Mr. Ramsay says, but how and why he says it. He is delivering a judgment which redounds to his own credit and which, by his whole manner of delivery, discredits others. He is the academic critic *par excellence*, and in the nominally digressive action which shortly follows, in which Mrs. Ramsay takes his admiring and parodic disciple, Charles Tansley, on an errand of charity in town, the point is underscored by her memory of the children's complaint, that Tansley turns everything interesting they talk about into something which reflects well upon himself and disparages them (*TTL* 16). The question, then, is not about the weather, or the true nature of things, though Mrs. Ramsay does hold out (at least nominally) for better weather, but about how to take life's grim realities. Still, there is a parental point at stake in Mr. Ramsay's nastiness:

> What he said was true. It was always true. He was incapable of untruth; never tampered with a fact; never altered a disagreeable word to suit the pleasure or convenience of any mortal being, least of all his own children, who, sprung from his loins, should be aware from childhood that life is difficult; facts uncompromising; and the passage to that fabled land where our brightest hopes are extinguished, our frail barks founder in darkness (here Mr. Ramsay would straighten his back and narrow his little blue eyes upon the horizon), one that needs, above all, courage, truth, and the power to endure. (*TTL* 10-11)

The parental aim is sensible enough, and Mrs. Ramsay even agrees with it, if we may apply to her Julia Stephen's final words to Virginia: "Hold yourself straight, my little Goat." But "my little Goat" makes all the difference. What Ramsey wants—minus the way he wants it—is valid; but he has left out certain preparatory steps in striking his heroic pose, and certain truths about himself. First of all, his wife has to keep from him her worries about household finances and other daily problems, and her own adverse feelings about his work, for these are "homely truths" he cannot face without breaking into senseless rages (*TTL* 62). Secondly, and most importantly, he himself requires emotional reassurance from his wife of a childlike order so as to overcome his sense of failure; and so we get the famous scene in which Mrs. Ramsay becomes " the fountain and spray of life," of " delicious fecundity," into which he plunges his sterile brass male beak, demanding and receiving the sympathy by which his vanity, his " satisfaction in his own splendour," is effectively restored, and becoming then " like a child who "—filled by maternal succor—" drops off satisfied " (*TTL* 48, 58-60). The satiric line is plain, and for the most part highly effective, but it is not quite adequate to the situation: for we all require some such reassurance, and Ramsay's problem is not that he wants it so badly but that he allows none to others and gives back very little, and not very often, in return. Mrs. Ramsay, for her part, gives too often and too much and is slowly sapped of her fecund strength.

Meanwhile her amazing resources, her radiant generosities, are movingly conveyed. She is concerned not only with her son's feelings, his immediate and long-range emotional needs, but with those of the Lighthouse keeper's tubercular son, for whom she is knitting hairy reddish brown stockings, and for the keeper himself, into whose daily boredom she thinks her way, and for whom she will find " a pile of old magazines, and some tobacco, indeed, whatever she could find lying about ":

> For how would you like to be shut up for a whole month at a time, and possibly more in stormy weather, upon a rock the size of a tennis lawn? she would ask; and to have no letters or newspapers, and to see nobody; if you were married not to see your wife, not to know how your children were,—if they were ill, if they had fallen down and broken their legs or arms; to see the same dreary waves breaking week after week, and then a dreadful storm coming, and the windows covered with spray, and the birds dashed against the lamp, and the whole place rocking, and not be able to put your nose out of doors for fear of being swept into the sea? How would you like that? she asked, addressing herself particularly to her daughters. So she added, rather differently, one must take them whatever comforts one can. (*TTL* 11-12)

At least one of her daughters, given the accents of Julia Stephen at work in this passage, would inherit this uncanny need to imagine oneself into and so recreate in great detail a total human situation, and would transmit her mother's inculcated empathy into verbal description, even as another daughter would transmit it into paint. Consider in this light that telling image from the early memoir, " Reminiscences," of Julia Stephen " standing by the open door of a railway carriage which was taking Stella and some others to Cambridge, and striking out in a phrase or two pictures of all the people who came past her along the platform, and so she kept them laughing till the train went " (*MB* 36). This is, of course, the historic point where the attempt to recreate for us those famous railway passengers, Mrs. Brown of " Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown " (1924) and the unfortunate Aunt Minnie of " An Unwritten Novel " (1920), begins. It suggests, rather strongly I think, that if Leslie Stephen is the obvious source of his daugther's critical and analytical powers, Julia Stephen is the secret source of her creative vision. But what Virginia turned into verbal art, her mother employed for empathetic acts of personal and social concern—a gift which Virginia sometimes mocked but more often envied, and to which she pays her own full empathetic tribute in her portrait of Mrs. Ramsay.

Thus Mrs. Ramsay wants to give to her son, and to the Lighthouse keeper and his son, and to Charles Tansley and the poor woman in town, and to her demanding husband and frightened daughter Cam, the reassurance they need to face life bravely; and we see in each case how sensitively she determines and responds to that universal need. Against her stoic solicitude, moreover, the author places Mr. Ramsay's " Damn you! "—his indecent and obtuse response when she again questions his view of tomorrow's weather:

> To pursue truth with such astonishing lack of consideration for other people's feelings, to rend the thin veils of civilisation so wantonly, so brutally, was to her so horrible an outrage of human decency that, without replying, dazed and blinded, she bent her head as if to let the pelt of jagged hail, the drench of dirty water, bespatter her unrebuked. There was nothing to be said. (*TTL* 51)

To which silent gesture he now humbly replies that he will step over and ask the Coastguard, if she likes, about the weather, and at once she feels there is " nobody she reverenced more " and that she is " not good enough to tie his shoe strings " (TTL 51). In this telling moment Virginia Woolf presents in essence the brutality of her father's rages, as she knew them in overwhelming fullness after his wife's death, and the abasement of her mother's reverence for her truth-telling tyrant, which she had witnessed in childhood. Queen and Tyrant, then, worshiping at each other's thrones in seesaw fashion; how could Virginia Woolf accept romantic marriage after that? Yet the attempt in *To the Lighthouse* is to justify, to celebrate, to commend the love between this well-matched ill-matched pair.

Thus Lily Briscoe, in discussing Mr. Ramsay's shortcomings with her friend William Bankes—his unselfish, generous, pure-hearted, wifeless, childless peer and double, a great man of science and the finest man she knows—still secretly prefers petty, selfish, vain, tyrannical, failed Mr. Ramsay because of his "fiery unworldliness," his love of dogs and children, his homage to his wife's beauty and to the family circle over which she presides (*TTL* 40-41); but above all she prefers him for the love he shares with Mrs. Ramsay, which disarms all criticism of him in its vital wholeness:

> Directly one looked up and saw them, what she called "being in love" flooded them. They became part of that unreal but penetrating and exciting universe which is the world seen through the eyes of love. The sky stuck to them; the birds sang through them. And, what was even more exciting, she felt, too, as she saw Mr. Ramsay bearing down and retreating, and Mrs. Ramsay sitting with James in the window and the cloud moving and the tree bending, how life, from being made up of little separate incidents which one lived one by one, became curled and whole like a wave which bore one up with it and threw one down with it, there, with a dash on the beach. (*TTL* 72-73)

To be in love, apparently, as the Ramsays are in love, is to be possessed by an intoxicating state which makes life whole, but which is for some reason "unreal." It is a love, moreover, peculiarly framed by the image of "Mrs. Ramsay sitting with James in the window," and it is to this picture that Mr. Bankes responds now with a different kind of rapture, one that disarms all criticism of Mrs. Ramsay:

> For him to gaze as Lily saw him gazing at Mrs. Ramsay was a rapture, equivalent, Lily felt, to the loves of dozens of young men (and perhaps Mrs. Ramsay had never excited the loves of dozens of young men). It was love, she thought, pretending to move her canvas, distilled and filtered; love that never attempted to clutch its object; but, like the love which mathematicians bear their symbols, or poets their phrases, was meant to be spread over the world and become part of the human gain. So it was indeed. The world by all means should

> have shared it, could Mr. Bankes have said why that woman pleased him so; why the sight of her reading a fairy tale to her boy had upon him precisely the same effect as the solution of a scientific problem, so that he rested in contemplation of it, and felt, as he felt when he had proved something absolute about the digestive system of plants, that barbarity was tamed, the reign of chaos subdued. (*TTL* 73-74)

A love distilled and filtered, then, and so better than the clutching loves of dozens of young men; a contemplative love, apparently, of late-Victorian madonna and child, the absolute beauty of the maternal bond, without which life could not begin. Such is the rapture Mrs. Ramsay rouses in the hearts of admiring men; and in Lily's heart too, for Mr. Bankes has just given her the aesthetic rationale for her modern abstract painting of James and Mrs. Ramsay in the window. Fair enough. But what are we to make of the clutching love which precedes it and makes life whole? That too is a mother and child relation, only between adults, one of whom is a fractious child soothed by maternal solicitude. Or is it only when Ramsay too feels this abstract rapture for the maternal bond, its absolute beauty, upon which he bears down threateningly but then retreats, that life is made whole? That seems to be the case, and Mrs. Ramsay's reciprocal reverence for his "splendid mind," his professional "greatness," his worldly reputation, seems to be its pale complement, much undercut by satiric references to stoppage at the letter R.

Or is it quite the case? Isn't it rather an intimacy, a closeness, which Lily Briscoe wants for herself—a living maternal bond and dependency upon which *this* family circle rests, its Victorian ambience here updated to the years before World War I? Mrs. Ramsay seems to invoke some such closeness when she admits that marriage, which she pushes upon all her young friends, "needed—oh, all sorts of qualities . . . one—she need not name it—that was essential; the thing she had with her husband" (*TTL* 93). So the abstract rapture depends upon this living bond, this living and immediate "thing," which Virginia Woolf finds exciting and unifying, but again, as in *Mrs. Dalloway*, in some sense "unreal." [6]

Meaning, perhaps, that there are things missing from any such blissful picture which undercut its truth, or that she doesn't wholly understand such bliss, or can't rely on it— can't bring it off as her mother did in different times—and therefore questions its validity. Let us assume all three possibilities as we look at what she makes and fails to make of it.

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[6] See Clarissa's imagined marriage to Peter Walsh, a lifetime of gaiety likened to a five-act play, in *Mrs. Dalloway* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1925), pp. 70-71.

Mrs. Ramsay herself makes the standard criticism of her queenly role: " that all this desire of hers to give, to help, was vanity . . . that she wished so instinctively to help, to give, that people might say of her, 'O Mrs. Ramsay! dear Mrs. Ramsay . . .' and need her and send for her and admire her " (*TTL* 65). She recalls, moreover, charges made aganst her by other parents, of robbing them of their children's affections, of " Wishing to dominate, wishing to interfere " and control—as with her present effective attempt to bring Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle together in a marriage which soon fares badly. And Lily too observes the self-serving fallibility of her pity for men like Bankes and Carmichael, who are secure in themselves and their work and need no pity.

She is vain and manipulative, then, at her worst, in carrying out her queenly role. Her jealousy of Minta once the engagement she has maneuvered has taken place and her husband has responded gallantly to the young girl's " golden haze," her awareness of his preference for " these golden-reddish girls, with something . . . a little wild and harum-scarum about them . . . some quality which she herself had not " (*TTL* 148-149), suggests further a vicarious involvement in the marriages she urges, as if she sought thereby some missing component in her own marriage to the otherwise dried-up Ramsay. Does she then dominate and manipulate him so he will need and admire her, and perhaps also withhold something from him in revenge for his own withholdings?

There is much evidence in the text, and in the lives behind the text, which supports these points. Consider first the traces of Julia Stephen's first marriage to Herbert Duckworth. Early in the novel, when Mrs. Ramsay hears that the Swiss maid's father is dying of cancer (as would Leslie Stephen at 72) and responds with that characteristic sadness that so enhances her beauty, there is a speculative passage following the repeated refrain, " Never did anybody look so sad ":

> But was it nothing but looks, people said? What was there behind it—her beauty and splendour? Had he blown his brains out, they asked, had he died the week before they were [to be] married—some other, earlier lover, of whom rumours

> reached one? Or was there nothing? nothing but an incomparable beauty which she lived behind, and could do nothing to disturb? For easily though she might have said at some moment of intimacy when stories of great passion, of love foiled, or ambition thwarted came her way how she too had known or felt or been through it herself, she never spoke. She was silent always. She knew then—she knew without having learnt. Her simplicity fathomed what clever people falsified. Her singleness of mind made her drop plumb like a stone, alight exact as a bird, gave her, naturally, this swoop and fall of the spirit upon truth which delighted, eased, sustained—falsely perhaps. (*TTL* 46)

The last thought probably refers to her ability to hit upon delightful assuasions of terror or despair, by which a boar's skull becomes a bird's nest or mountain landscape, as that bird simile suggests. But it also draws away, oddly, from her problematic sadness; and its temporizing " falsely perhaps " obscures the fact that an attribution of pure intuitive simplicity makes Mrs. Ramsay a great deal more wonderful, say, than Julia Duckworth, who like most mortals learned the hard way about life's harshness when, in the fourth year of their marriage, her first husband suddenly died and she was left to raise three children by herself. Her stoic outlook and ingrained melancholy *followed* from that event, as did whatever intuitive simplicities she then avidly applied to the misfortunes of others. Interestingly, having had this experience, she too never spoke about it, at least to her highly curious children by two marriages, who between them developed their own romantic family legend about it, of perfect and complete happiness and shattering loss (*MB* 32, 89-90).

Is Mrs. Ramsay's borrowed silence a coverup for missing widowhood and continuing ghostly union? Unlike Julia Stephen, she apparently has nothing to tell. Yet she is also silent or evasive when she *does* have things to tell, as when her husband wants her to share her ingrained sadness and she calls it " wool-gathering " (though, interestingly, at the precise moment he notes her sadness she is thinking of herself as " a bride " rising like a mist " to meet her lover," *TTL* 98, 104), or when he wants her to tell him that she loves him and she acknowledges instead his rightness about the weather (*TTL* 184). The long first section, " The Window," ends in fact with her " triumph " over him in again not saying in so many words that she loves him, though he knows from her radiant smile and consummate happiness that she does.

Well, yes, of course she loves him, but triumphing over him is also necessary to her love; and though it is supposed to imply the triumph of unspoken communication, of selfless inner being, over the inadequacies of words and the vanities of mere personalities, it may mean something else as well: namely, that she *doesn't* love him passionately, as Julia Duckworth loved Herbert, and so *can't* tell him she loves him in so many words. Suppose we posit here that her spoken vows belong to another man, a ghostly thief of love who exists, or once existed, outside the text, but whom Virginia Woolf is now trying (not always successfully) to suppress? [7] This would explain Mrs. Ramsay's curious silences, and it would also explain why she is so remote from Ramsay, in her melancholia, that he cannot " protect her." After all, what intuitive " simplicity " makes her behave in these remote and silent ways—she who has so many reassuring words for other sufferers and, indeed, for all his other sufferings? Is it really because "He could say things " whereas " she never could say what she felt," as Virginia Woolf asserts (*TTL* 185)?

In a recent review of Leslie Stephen's *Mausoleum Book* Francis Wyndham makes the nice point that Julia Stephen remained " a kind of widow " even through her second marriage, " serenely moving in a higher sphere where the consciousness of tragedy was never far from the surface." [8] It was a sphere so high, apparently, that Leslie Stephen, like Mr. Ramsay, could never reach her. He too wanted to break into her sorrow—wanted her to say in so many words, " I love you "—and had to settle for loving her reticence when she did not. No wonder that Virginia Stephen fantasied for her reticent mother a dead clergyman husband whom she longed for (*MB* 82), and hallucinated a deathly reunion for her, a mysterious man sitting on the edge of her bed when she died, as if filling out the family script! (*MB* 92). But for Mrs. Ramsay she could not bring herself to imagine, much less hallucinate, that missing widowhood which explains her silent, remote, and melancholy ways, nor that romantic first marriage which explains her withholdings and her apparent need to keep Ramsay hanging and unsatisfied, as he obviously kept her long unsatisfied, whatever their domestic bliss. A *de facto* widow, she has settled for maternal control over her dependent childlike husband, and has encouraged his dependency, in the absence of, among other things, that "great passion," sexual as well as affectionate, which she might have enjoyed with a different husband.

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[7] See my forthcoming essay, " The Robber in the Bedroom, or The Thief of Love: A Woolfian Grieving in Six Novels and Two Memoirs," in *Critical Inquiry*, Summer 1979.

[8] *London Times*, Sunday, December 11, 1977, 40.

In the text itself the absence of such passion between the Ramsays is hinted at in several ways. The most obvious confirmation comes when Ramsay retires to his study after dinner, still smarting from a rebuff to Scott's fiction which implies that his own work might not last, and finds in Scott's handling of "poor Steenie's drowning and Mucklebackit's sorrow" in *The Antiquary* evidence not only of his lasting value but of his superiority as well to French novelists in their concern with sexual love (*TTL* 180). Invigorated and moved to tears by Scott's example, Ramsay uses the word "fiddlesticks" to define the French concern; and watching his wife reading Shakespeare's sonnets beside him, he further concludes that "the whole of life did not consist in going to bed with a woman" (*TTL* 181). In weeping over death and dismissing sex he is, of course, very much like his Clapham forbears, as A. O. J. Cockshut argues,[9] but the comfort he takes here for his own professional failure may also reflect another kind of failure. Mrs. Ramsay intimates as much while dressing for dinner and seeing outside the window a sight which always amuses her, "the rooks trying to decide which tree to settle on," and the old father rook with half his wing feathers missing, "a bird of a very trying and difficult disposition" whom she calls "old Joseph," fighting with another rook:

> "Look!" she said, laughing. They were actually fighting. Joseph and Mary were fighting. Anyhow they all went up again, and the air was shoved aside by their black wings and cut into exquisite scimitar shapes. (*TTL* 121-122)

If this parable on her own marriage makes her laugh, and its outcome seems to her lovely, and if she tries now to keep her son Jasper from shooting at such pathetic personified birds, those "scimitar shapes" remind us all the same of that sterile beak of brass, "the arid scimitar of the male," which plunges into her "fountain and spray of life" in earlier pages, demanding sympathy. Of course, all males seem sterile to Mrs. Ramsay, and in need of her protection; but the Joseph and Mary story goes beyond sterility to suggest displacement by some more potent spirit—such as Herbert Duckworth.

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[9] *Truth to Life: The Art of Biography in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), pp. 74-76. See also Virginia Woolf's similar views on *The Antiquary*, *Collected Essays*, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966), I, 139-143, especially p. 142 on Steenie's death.

Mrs. Ramsay's recollections of Carrie and Herbert Manning in her dinner conversation with William Bankes, who has received a letter from Carrie, may yield still another trace of that more potent spirit: for the Mannings were a couple she had known briefly twenty years back (the time, relatively, of Julia Stephen's first marriage) who did things decisively, stuck to plans when they made them, slayed pesky dragons ("Never should she forget Herbert killing a wasp with a teaspoon on the bank"), and lived in a "dream land" of the past, in their house on the Thames, where life lay "like a lake, placidly between its banks," and where she moved "without haste or anxiety; for there was no future to worry about." Now, as she converses about them with Bankes, she moves about "like a ghost" on that day "very still and beautiful" when she first visited them (*TTL* 132, 140). But she hasn't thought about them for years, and it is probably too much to find in this preserved idyll more than a few traces—a suggestively virile name and manner, a protected carefree life—of that missing first marriage. We may want to place more emphasis instead on the tale of the fisherman and his wife Mrs. Ramsay reads that day to her son James, the fairy tale which figures so importantly in everybody's vision of the Ramsay's love:

> She read on: "Ah wife," said the man, "why should we be King? I do not want to be King." "Well," said the wife, "if you won't be King, I will; go to the Flounder, for I will be King." (*TTL* 86)

Somewhere between the first and third sections of the novel Mr. Ramsay, a decided flounderer in kingly matters himself, seems to have gone to the Flounder for advice about his wife's request; for in taking the children to the Lighthouse he belatedly acknowledges her Kingship, involving not merely her supremacy in love but also her rightness about the primacy of kindness over truth. It is his kind of mission, moreover, an heroic expedition, most of which he spends with his head buried in a book, to deliver the brown parcels she had planned to send to the keeper and his son ten years before. On the journey Ramsay is said to "escape" into his book, which becomes an expedition in thought, a scramble up mental mountains. But books and poems have other functions for him, and the question of what he is doing inside them is crucial to his character.

"Someone had blundered" is the refrain he repeats aloud through the first section of the novel, embarrassing his wife and his guests by the intensity of his involvement with the poem's futile heroics. In Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade," itself a prime example of the pointless heroic posturing of an age unsure of its values, Mr. Ramsay finds a moving instance of his own self-dramatizing pity, his own pointlessly heroic blunders as a failed philosopher. And he is ridiculously lovable, if embarrassing, in being forced to seek emotional comfort in this manner. His Victorian posturing takes a more mellow form as both he and Augustus Carmichael recite Charles Elton's "Luriana, Lurilee" at the end of dinner (*TTL* 166-167), and so acknowledge his wife's unifying social powers, her dinner-table artistry, which in its creation of a human stay against chaotic night partakes (we are told) "of eternity" (*TTL* 158).

On the voyage to the Lighthouse the refrain which possesses him, and which his children echo as they come to side with him, is "we perished, each alone," from Cowper's "The Castaway." He has been living inside this poem, apparently, since his wife's death, and—if at 71 he has, like Leslie Stephen, only a year more to live— in anticipation of his own. In his excitement he repeats the lines aloud, to his children's outrage, and then murmurs gently the self-pitying lines: "But I beneath a rougher sea/Was whelmed in deeper gulfs than he." Taking "he" as his wife we may indeed ponder his continuing vanity; but if the "he" is also Herbert Duckworth, in its biographical ambiguities, he has his point. He has lived longer and more dependently with the same woman, has now outlived her rather than died before her, and is more lost without her than she would be without him—or than her prototype was without Herbert Duckworth. But if his extremes of grief and vanity reflect his continuing dependency, he has nonetheless converted, in his remoteness, his gloom, his dignity, and now in his symbolic act of compassion, to her side. We learn of his tyranny in his widower years from his children, but all we see of it is their forced obedience now in joining his Lighthouse mission. We learn of his insatiable demands for sympathy in his grief from women, and of his delight in receiving it: but when, with histrionic groans and sighs, he demands such sympathy now from Lily Briscoe, and she finally manages to compliment his boots, he is released by her comic tribute to male vanity to a new and final phase "when it seemed as if he had shed worries and ambitions, and the hope of sympathy and the desire for praise, had entered some other region, was drawn on, as if by curiosity, in dumb colloquy, whether with himself or another, at the head of that little procession out of one's range" (*TTL* 233). So Lily last sees him, this man who in her previous angry judgment "never gave," always "took" (*TTL* 223). But he has just given her a lesson in tying knots, in return for her compliment, and has moved her thereby to tears of sympathy which will help her to untie the mental knot that binds her painter's mind. And on the voyage to the Lighthouse he gives to his daughter Cam sufficient sympathy to remind her of those library moments "when he was not vain, nor a tyrant, and did not wish you to pity him," and was likely to ask "as gently as any one could, Was there nothing he could give her?" (*TTL* 282). And to his son James, who still wants to kill him for childhood tyrannies, for brutal sarcasms and intolerable vanities now recalled, he gives the expeditionary kudo, "Well done!" and so includes him in his own stern vision of stoic manhood (*TTL* 306). And to them he seems himself a "young man" again, brave and upright in a godless world—a young man for whom they will "do anything," as he springs from the boat to the Lighthouse rock (*TTL* 308).

This was how Virginia Woolf saw her father in his final days, when it seemed to her a new and better phase of his life was just beginning. Cam and James at 17 and 16, like Virginia and Adrian at 22 and 21, are old enough to begin to be possible companions to their father; so there is fit lightheartedness to this final tribute to his better fictive self. But the spirit which moves him, and which makes him accessible to his children, is that of his wife, whose belief in the need for reassurance in a godless world he now quixotically expedites and (all too faintly) mimes, and so reunites the family he has ravaged, more savagely in life than in this fiction, and for them at least unites her wisdom with his own ability to reach the letter R.

This was as close as Virginia Woolf would come to imagining a man strong enough to match her mother's emotionally creative powers and to restore her own shaky belief in romantic marriage. She knew, from the intense mothering she received from Leonard Woolf, particularly in the early years of their marriage, that men are not by definition emotionally sterile, that they too may provide nurturing love; but she never acknowledged this in her fiction—never showed a woman depending as heavily as she did upon Leonard for the strength and reassurance to go on being creative, being herself. The demands she made upon his sympathies were more terrible, if more real, than those her father made upon his wife and daughters. Her fear of failure in her writings, her preoccupation with literary fame, was more devastating in its consequences for Leonard and herself, in terms of actual illness,

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than her father's all-too-exemplary fears in their immediate consequences for his wife and family; but of course it is his egotism she repeats and dislikes in herself—and castigates in him. Her " madness " was her excuse for faults very like his own, to which she never really admitted, perhaps because of her concern with " greatness," in which —to be sure—her husband shared.

She was right, however, to look to her mother's life for some insight into her own creative powers and possibilities, for she owed most of her creative strengths—her intuitive, empathetic, and poetic powers, her impressive private reaches, her easy sociabilities—to this remarkable woman. But she could not look to her mother's death in this novel, nor even in *The Years*, without being overwhelmed in that deeper gulf of self-dramatizing pity her father so foolishly claimed for himself, hence she wisely avoided it. This meant, however, that she had to borrow Lily Briscoe's grief from her own buried fund of confused childhood feelings, minus her own psychic history, even as she had borrowed Mrs. Ramsay's silences from Julia Stephen's absent widowhood.

The " Time Passes " section of the novel is itself the prime reflection in Virginia Woolf's fiction of her initial inability to grieve her mother's death, and of the long delay in releasing her unspent emotions.[10] Instead of facing up in this section to the impact of Mrs. Ramsay's death upon her husband and children, she devotes it to the question of her continuing spiritual presence and leaves her death for the family friend, Lily Briscoe, to cope with ten years later. Lily's position in this regard is very much like her own in writing the novel; but then the evasiveness of the " Time Passes " section is very much her own evasiveness in breaking " the unity of [her] design." Her nominal intention is to show, through the passage of time, the randomness of senseless death and the persistence beyond it of certain imperishable human qualities. Her choice of the summer home at Skye is in this regard like her choice of Jacob's room, in the novel of that title, as a register of human presence. As such it runs counter to her objections to Arnold Bennett's fiction in " Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," where

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[10] See Helene Deutsch, " Absence of Grief," *Neuroses and Character Types: Clinical Psychoanalytic Studies*, eds. John D. Sutherland and M. Masud R. Khan (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1965), pp. 226-236, on the problem of blocked grief and the need to work through it emotionally in later years. For a fuller account of absent grief in Woolf and its relation to her first mental breakdown, see my *Critical Inquiry* essay cited above.

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environmental detail was supposedly inadequate as an index to human character; but she works the environment for unusual spiritual evidence, almost for mystic meaning.

Narrating the section through the common selfless voice she had developed in *Mrs. Dalloway*, she personifies the forces of change and disintegration as "the little airs," detached from the rougher wind outside, which press through the deserted house asking assorted domestic objects how long they will endure. The allegorical device is, to say the least, precious and pretentious, not because "airs" are unsuitable to a decaying summer house as agents of disintegrative inquiry, but because the level of inquiry is too safely abstruse to yield much heartfelt meaning. Walt Disney's animated cartoons often do as well or better with such devices, though for less serious ends. We learn nonetheless that the bedrooms of the house stand fast against the first inroads of decay, if only because there are still living sleepers inside them. It is the last night of summer occupancy, after which the "stray airs, advance guards of great armies," may come in and do their work without human resistance. But even then the loveliness and stillness observed by common selfless consciousness remain steadfast in the bedroom, clasping ethereal hands, as evidence that the spirit of Mrs. Ramsay still persists. Meanwhile "divine goodness," also personified, is foiled by the forces of destruction; anonymous sleepless beach-walkers are unable to get answers from the sea and the night as to the whys and wherefores of existence; and the death of Mrs. Ramsay is recorded in a brief parenthesis:

> [Mr. Ramsey, stumbling along a passage one dark morning, stretched his arms out, but Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, his arms, though stretched out, remained empty.] (*TTL* 194)

We know that Virginia Stephen offered to fill such arms on the actual occasion of her mother's death, when her father charged past her without noticing her need to share their common grief (*MB* 91). She may well be avenging herself here, but death's ironic triumph is all we witness.

Shortly after this the 70-year-old cleaning woman, Mrs. NcNab, arrives to sing her witless caretaking song of human persistency, and we get one of those painfully inauthentic attempts, like that of the beggarwoman in the park in *Mrs. Dalloway*, to show the historic sweep of human suffering through the sensibility of a proletarian woman.

Then the deaths of Prue and Andrew Ramsay are parenthetically recorded—hers (like Stella Duckworth's) from "some illness connected with childbirth" (*TTL* 199); his (like Jacob Flanders') by an exploding shell in France in World War I (*TTL* 201); and the narrative view expands to include "gigantic chaos" outside the house and "idiotic games" (recalling the author's fear of the "idiot boy" in childhood, *MB* 78) in a universe "battling and tumbling, in brute confusion and wanton lust aimlessly by itself" (*TTL* 202-203). Against these odds the heroic Mrs. McNab invokes now her sisterly memory of Mrs. Ramsay coming up the drive with the washing, calling out to the servants, stooping over her flowers, then dissolving into a yellow-beamed lady in a grey cloak (recalling that womblike "film of semi-transparent yellow" through which the author peered in childhood, *MB* 65) wandering over the walls and furniture with her as she works. The Lighthouse beam, with which Mrs. Ramsay had identified in one of her selfless and eternal moments of private wedge-shaped being while she lived, underscores her persisting presence; and so inspirited, the forces of human persistency prevail as Mrs. McNab, joined by Mrs. Bast and her son George, begin to restore the house to its former habitableness, in preparation for the approaching expeditionary hero, Mr. Ramsay, four of his six remaining children, the belated mourner Lily Briscoe, and other friends. By these worked-up allegorical devices, then, the impersonal narrator sweeps over the actual impact of Julia Stephen's death, the funereal gloom, tyranny, and outrage which enveloped her survivors, and the severities of unworked grief and mental breakdown from which, we know, the need to write this novel arose. If sentimentality is, as I. A. Richards holds, a form of inhibition, the middle section is decidedly sentimental.

The question of unworked grief is left, of course, for Lily Briscoe to solve in the final section. But why she should grieve Mrs. Ramsay at all, or be so involved with her in life as to feel such want, pain, and anger at her death, we do not know. Nor does the concluding section ever explain it. Still, in memorable and moving fashion, it records the emotions and confusions which Virginia Woolf herself must have undergone at the time of her mother's death, and the process of therapeutic release she underwent, along with Lily, in creating this objective correlative for grieving. Thus Lily, like Virginia at her mother's deathbed and for thirty years thereafter, feels "Nothing, nothing—nothing that she could express at all" on coming back "after all these years and

Mrs. Ramsay dead" (*TTL* 217). Alone at the breakfast table, she again wonders why she has come, for the thought of "Mrs. Ramsay dead; Andrew killed; Prue dead too—repeat it as she might,—roused no feeling in her" (*TTL* 219). She is also angry with Mrs. Ramsay for dying and leaving her to cope with Mr. Ramsay's oppressive demands for sympathy, which prevent her from redoing her unfinished painting of ten years past. The incommensurate nature of her anger is instructive; her reaction to Mr. Ramsay in the crucial passage below, and to Mrs. Ramsay as its departed secret cause, is that of a child raised by colossal parents rather than a friend on a weekend stay at a summer house. As such it is plainly borrowed from the author's life and smuggled into this 44-year-old spinster's midlife crisis, her wasting time and talent, which for no evident reason she also blames on Mrs. Ramsay:

> That man, she thought, her anger rising in her, never gave; that man took. She, on the other hand, would be forced to give. Mrs. Ramsay had given. Giving, giving, giving she had died—and had left all this. Really, she was very angry with Mrs. Ramsay. With the brush slightly trembling in her fingers she looked at the hedge, the step, the wall. Here was Lily, at forty-four, wasting her time, unable to do a thing, standing there, playing at painting, playing at the one thing one did not play at, and it was all Mrs. Ramsay's fault. She was dead. The step where she used to sit was empty. She was dead.
>
> But why repeat this over and over again? Why be always trying to bring up some feeling she had not got? There was a kind of blasphemy in it. It was all dry; all withered; all spent. (*TTL* 223-224)

Why indeed does Lily feel this terrible repeated need to bring up some long-blocked feeling about Mrs. Ramsay's death? The text never tells us; the life-sources of her unworked grief are all we have to go by—the image from the late memoir, for instance, of Virginia Stephen, aged 13, stretching out her arms to a father who never gave, on that early morning when a mother who gave too much had stopped giving altogether and had left her to cope with life's confusions. Her anger with her mother for leaving her, implicit then in her inability to grieve, is filtered now through this spinster surrogate whose childlike attachment to the Ramsays is so oddly and inexplicably a textual given. One brief notation, that she is a spinster who keeps house for her father off the Brompton Road (*TTL* 32), allows us to *deduce* the rationale for her attachment: for she has obviously lost her mother at some unspecified age, and—perhaps through Mrs. Ramsay's ready solicitude—has felt the need to adopt this family for her own, and through them to work out the terms of her own parental relations. We are told nothing helpful, however, about her previous relations with the Ramsays, and *nothing at all* about her actual parents: but from Virginia Woolf's parental relations we can understand why Lily now wants to be like Mrs. Ramsay, to be able to give sympathy to her husband in the late-Victorian manner, why she rebukes now her own sexual unworthiness in refusing that traditional woman's role and concludes that she is "not a woman, but a peevish, ill-tempered, dried-up old maid" (*TTL* 226). For she is facing now the problem which Virginia Woolf faced at 13 with her mother's death, and again at 15 with Stella Duckworth's death—how to become a woman without maternal guidance. As her adopted mother Mrs. Ramsay had disparaged Lily's art and had tried to marry her off to William Bankes; but she had also admired Lily's defiant spirit as akin to her own silent inner strength, and without intending it, she had created for her a model of sympathetic artistry in life which, after her death, gives life to Lily's art. Thus Lily, an emotionally undeveloped woman, must not only come to terms with Mrs. Ramsay before she can finish her painting, she must also emulate her creativity in life, in marriage, at every step of her artistic work. Her artistry is in fact a maternal inheritance, a distilled result of maternal guidance long-delayed by death and emotional arrest, and even her spinsterhood is a distillation of Mrs. Ramsay's marital withholdings. She is in these regards rather like Stephen Dedalus, another remorseful griever, whose sterile artistry must be fertilized by his relations with "adopted" parents. But more to the point, Lily at 44, divided between life and art, is like Virginia Woolf in her forties as she writes this novel, trying to convert her ungrieved grief into a lasting portrait of the lost beloved:

> For how could one express in words these emotions of the body? express that emptiness there? (She was looking at the drawing-room steps; they looked extraordinarily empty.) It was one's body feeling, not one's mind. The physical sensations that went with that bare look of the steps had become suddenly extremely unpleasant. To want and not to have, sent all up her a hardness, a hollowness, a strain. And then to want and not to have—to want and want—how that wrung the heart, and wrung it again and again! Oh, Mrs. Ramsay! she called out silently, to that essence which sat by the boat,

> that abstract one made of her, that woman in grey, as if to abuse her for having gone, and then having gone, come back again. It had seemed so safe, thinking of her. Ghost, air, nothingness, a thing you could play with easily and safely at any time of the day or night, she had been that, and then suddenly she put her hand out and wrung the heart thus. (*TTL* 266)

Lily's heart is wrung, apparently, by the grief which Virginia Stephen had failed to release when her mother died, by her anger at being deserted by the woman whose love she wanted so much,[11] and by the return of that repressed anger and its beloved ghostly object. Thus Lily's eyes now fill with tears, as she tries to look at her painting, and she cries for Mrs. Ramsay "without being aware of any unhappiness" (*TTL* 268). Then, calling in imagination to old Mr. Carmichael on the lawn beside her, she begins asking questions about such unexpected and miraculous events, and she feels "that if they both got up, here, now on the lawn, and demanded an explanation" of life as to its shortness and inexplicability,

> then beauty would roll itself up; the space would fill; those empty flourishes would form into shapes; if they shouted loud enough Mrs. Ramsay would return. "Mrs. Ramsay!" she said aloud, "Mrs. Ramsay!" The tears ran down her face. (*TTL* 268)

When Mrs. Ramsay fails to come Lily is ashamed of her ignominious cry of pain and want and "bitter anger"; but gradually the pain subsides and, with "a relief that was balm in itself," she senses Mrs. Ramsay's presence by her side, then sees her moving off in all her beauty, "raising to her forehead a wreath of white flowers with which she went":

> Lily squeezed her tubes again. She attacked that problem of the hedge. It was strange how clearly she saw her, stepping with her usual quickness across fields among whose folds, purplish and soft, among whose flowers, hyacinth or lilies,

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[11] See Jean O. Love, *Virginia Woolf: Sources of Madness and Art* (Berkeley: *University of California Press*, 1977) on the intensity of Virginia's need for her mother's love from infancy onward. Ms. Love cites early weaning due to bad health, distracting problems with the other children, and frequent absences on charitable missions, as instances of Julia's inaccessibility for Virginia. See especially pp. 142, 214-216, 230-234.

> she vanished. It was some trick of the painter's eye. For days after she had heard of her death she had seen her thus, putting her wreath to her forehead *and going unquestioningly with her companion, a shade across the fields.* The sight, the phrase, had its power to console. Wherever she happened to be, painting, here, in the country or in London the vision would come to her, and her eyes, half closing, sought something to base her vision on. She looked down the railway carriage, the omnibus; took a line from shoulder or creek; looked at the windows opposite, at Piccadilly, lamp-strung in the evening. All had been part of the fields of death. (*TTL* 269-270, italics mine)

Virginia Woolf's first memories were of riding with her mother on train and bus going to Cornwall (*MB* 64); and on her mother's death she had even hallucinated that man sitting on the edge of her mother's bed (*MB* 92) whom I am going to propose now as the otherwise unidentified companion with whom Mrs. Ramsay goes so unquestioningly, " a shade across the fields." We may want to call the companion Death rather than Herbert Duckworth; but I think the edge lies rather with some waiting former mortal, as it did when her mother died, and that the consolation lies in Stella Duckworth's prescient response to that hallucination: " It's nice that she shouldn't be alone " (*MB* 92). Certainly the *two* companions Lily later imagines with Mrs. Ramsay, when she groups her death with those of Prue and Andrew, are former mortals; but even here, as the three shades move together across the fields, Mrs. Ramsay walks " rather fast in front, as if she expected to meet some one round the corner " (*TTL* 299)—no doubt her previous companion of the fields, our fictive prototype for the ghost of Herbert Duckworth, that first and most beloved husband of Julia Stephen.[12]

It is at this point, when Lily has grouped her dead, that someone sits in the drawing-room chair where Mrs. Ramsay had first posed for her painting, and settles "by some stroke of luck so as to throw an odd-shaped triangular shadow over the step." With this symbol of private wedge-shaped selfless being reestablished, Mrs. Ramsay again comes back to her. At first the old horror—"to want and want and not to have"—comes back too; but when Mrs. Ramsay seems to refrain from inflicting it, it becomes "part of ordinary experience," and Lily moves to the edge of the lawn to share her vision of Mrs. Ramsay in her "perfect goodness," knitting the reddish-brown stocking for the Lighthouse keeper's boy, with Mr. Ramsay, whom she now "wants" for the first time. And in this state of resolved emotion she is able to finish her painting.

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[12] I identify Mrs. Ramsay's two companions on p. 299 as Prue and Andrew because Prue has just joined her in death and Andrew's death has been previously on Lily's mind (p. 289) as she ponders old Carmichael's strong reaction to it. But actually Andrew died *after* Prue died, not before, so the grouping on p. 299 might be that of Prue, Mrs. Ramsay, and our unidentified friend noted on p. 270. In which case Mrs. Ramsay may walk on ahead to meet Andrew when he dies. That she walked so in life, as Woolf notes on pp. 19-20, suggests that she has always been on the lookout for such deathly companions, or for her impending deathly reunion with at least one who had gone before her.

What does it mean when Lily says of Mr. Ramsay now, "She wanted him" (*TTL* 300)? Will the 44-year-old spinster marry the 71-year-old widower? That seems unlikely, though Mrs. Ramsay had once intended her for Ramsay's contemporary, William Bankes. The more probable meaning is that she is now sufficiently one with Mrs. Ramsay to be able to give him freely the womanly sympathy he needs; and in fact, as she surmises that he has reached the Lighthouse, she feels that "Whatever she had wanted to give him, when he left her that morning, she had given him at last" (*TTL* 308-309). It is an odd conclusion, since he is not there to benefit from her changed condition, her newfound "wanting" for him; but perhaps she has beamed it over to him, mystically, or perhaps, in becoming capable of supportive sympathy, she has become the kind of woman Ramsay would approve, and in that sense has conceded to him what she could never before concede. In either case she has become the Ramsay's common heir, a surrogate daughter capable of grieving her mother and comforting her father, and of loving them both selflessly, without clutching demands.

A lovely heritage, then, however long-delayed. Not many of us are able to come to such gratifying terms with our departed or departing parents. But, as Lily's borrowings from the author's life attest, there is something missing in her artistic vision of parental love and daughterly devotion. Ideally she would be released now from spinsterhood, or at least from her skeptical view of the Ramsays' marriage. And she does arrive at a vision of their engagement which *seems* to be her touchstone for romantic love. Thus, late in the novel, remembering how Ramsay would stop dead in front of his wife and "some curious shock" would pass through her (*TTL* 294), she converts the scene into an instance of romantic vowing:

> He stretched out his hand and raised her from the chair. It seemed somehow as if he had once bent in the same way and raised her from a boat which, lying a few inches off some island, had required that the ladies should thus be helped on shore by the gentlemen. An old-fashioned scene that was, which required, very nearly, crinolines and peg-top trousers. Letting herself be helped by him, Mrs. Ramsay had thought (Lily supposed) the time has come now. Yes, she would say it now. Yes, she would marry him. And she stepped slowly, quietly on shore. Probably she said one word only, letting her hand rest still on his; but no more. Time after time the same thrill had passed between them—obviously it had, Lily thought. . . . She was not inventing; she was only trying to smooth out something she had been given years ago folded up; something she had seen. (TTL 295)

If Lily is not inventing, Virginia is. As she knew from her father's *Mausoleum Book*, her mother had agreed to marry him while seated in an armchair by her own fireplace one January evening in 1878; she had done so in seventeen words, not one, and only after lengthy verbal vacillations recorded in a year's exchange of letters. The crinolines and peg-top trousers came, moreover, from those summers at Little Holland House in her youth—the "summer afternoon world" of eminent men and ladies over which Virginia rhapsodizes in her memoirs (*MB* 86-87)—when her mother had not yet met Stephen (who had found the place too "alarming" for his taste when he glimpsed her there in 1866!); and the boating metaphor no doubt derived from the tour of Venice and/or Lake Lucerne that summer where Julia met (and shortly after married) Herbert Duckworth.[13] In other words, Virginia Woolf has transposed the charged romantic ambience of her mother's first engagement to her second, as if finally restoring stolen love! She has restored the missing depth of passion, as signalled by electric vowing, but whether she has done so by sure creative instinct, or by sleight of hand, seems so uncertain that she questions it herself.

Thus Lily moves immediately from this "folded" and decidedly suspect memory to the Ramsays' quarrels—the bedroom door slamming, Mr. Ramsay whizzing a plate through the window—tempests which, though soon resolved in garden colloquies, had taken their emotional toll on Mrs. Ramsay. A bit earlier, moreover, she types such occasions as instances of Mrs. Ramsay's weakness with her husband, for " She let him make those scenes " (*TTL* 291). The problem relates to her own reluctance to sympathize with this man who never gave, only took. Still, as his token giving on the Lighthouse journey attests, he seems to have learned something about reciprocity since his wife's death, and to that extent the novel defines the possibility, at least, of mutually supportive, if not electric love. This much, we may hazard, Virginia Woolf herself was able to achieve in her companionate marriage with Leonard Woolf as part of her own parental heritage. But the problem also relates back to Lily's antipathy toward the sexual aspects of marriage as signalled by those electric thrills. In the opening section of the novel she had been possessed by " the vibration of love " between Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle, so much so that when Paul announced his intention to get up early in the morning to search the beach for Minta's missing brooch, Lily wanted to join him:

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[13] See Leslie Stephen's *The Mausoleum Book* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 57, for the actual acceptance scene, and 47-57 for the epistolary vacillations leading up to it. See 30-31 for his 1866 visit to Little Holland House. Stephen places the Venice visit (when Julia first met Duckworth) in 1862, when she was 16, and leaves the Lake Lucerne meeting indefinite (34, 36). In her own memoirs Virginia Woolf collates the Venice visit with her mother's first marriage when she was 21 (*MB* 89).

> Lily wanted to protest violently and outrageously her desire to help him, envisaging how in the dawn on the beach she would be the one to pounce on the brooch half-hidden by some stone, and thus herself be included among the sailors and adventurers. But what did he reply to her offer? She actually said with an emotion that she seldom let appear, " Let me come with you," and he laughed. He meant yes or no—either perhaps. But it was not his meaning—it was the odd chuckle he gave, as if he had said, Throw yourself over the cliff if you like, I don't care. He turned on her cheek the heat of love, its horror, its cruelty, its unscrupulosity. It scorched her, and Lily, looking at Minta, being charming to Mr. Ramsay at the other end of the table, flinched for her exposed to those fangs, and was thankful. For at any rate, she said to herself, catching sight of the salt cellar on the pattern, she need not marry, thank Heaven; she need not undergo that degradation. She was saved from that dilution. She would move the tree rather more to the middle. (*TTL* 153-154)

Taking this with the undiluted grain of salt provided above, as the traditional sour-grapes response of a spinster who finds compensation in her painting, the difficulty it raises for romantic marriage is nonetheless considerable. For, as Lily now concludes, the "love between Paul and Minta—so beautiful and exciting" that she trembles "on the verge of it" and offers to look for the missing brooch—is also "the stupidest, the most barbaric of human passions, and turns a nice young man with a profile like a gem's (Paul's was exquisite) into a bully with a crowbar (he was swaggering, he was insolent) in the Mile End Road" (*TTL* 154). And she further finds it "tedious, puerile, and inhumane," though also "beautiful and necessary" (*TTL* 155). Having arrived at this internal impasse, she is willing to wait for any further "light upon the question of love" that conversation or time may bring; but ten years later, when she thinks again of the Rayleys, it is only to take satisfaction in their marital disharmonies, in her own spinsterhood, and in Mrs. Ramsay's obvious wrongness about them all. Yet at this very moment of her triumph over Mrs. Ramsay, she is again seized by love's barbaric power:

> Suddenly, as suddenly as a star slides in the sky, a reddish light seemed to burn in her mind, covering Paul Rayley, issuing from him. It rose like a fire sent up in token of some celebration by savages on a distant beach. She heard the roar and the crackle. The whole sea for miles around ran red and gold. Some winey smell mixed with it and intoxicated her, for she felt again her own headlong desire to throw herself off the cliff and be drowned looking for a pearl brooch on a beach. And the roar and the crackle repelled her with fear and disgust, as if while she saw its splendour and power she saw too how it fed on the treasure of the house, greedily, disgustingly, and she loathed it. But for a sight, for a glory it surpassed everything in her experience, and burnt year after year like a signal fire on a desert island at the edge of the sea, and one had only to say "in love" and instantly, as happened now, up rose Paul's fire again. And it sank and she said to herself, laughing, "The Rayleys". . . . (*TTL* 261-262)

As the passage makes abundantly clear, Lily has been sexually attracted to Paul Rayley all these years. But by defining "in love" by his sexual powers, she has moved away from her original definition of what "being in love" meant for the Ramsays. Their crinolines and peg-top trousers seem quite civilized by contrast with Paul's barbaric fires, and we are forced to conclude that their romantic marriage is in some sense asexual, for all the thrills and shocks which occur when their eyes and hands meet: or perhaps more fairly, that their sexuality has been channeled into borrowed gallantries and real quarrels, that compassion is their ruling mode, and that there are no depths of passion between them.

Are we supposed to choose then between marriages of passion and compassion? Not, surely, if they produce bullies of sexuality like Paul Rayley, on the one hand, and bullies of sympathy like Mr. Ramsay on the other. Is Mr. Ramsay's belated reciprocity the corrective answer? It makes him strong again, but we know already how much he minimizes sexual love. It seems to me, rather, that Lily is confused, that she can deal with sexual attraction between the Rayleys, but not between the Ramsays, because she shares in the author's inability to confront this aspect of her parents' marriage. We have already seen how Virginia Woolf suppresses Mrs. Ramsay's rumored first love, gives to Minta that "harum-scarum" wildness Mrs. Ramsay supposedly lacks, and denies Mrs. Ramsay the clutching admiration of dozens of young men—though in fact Julia Stephen was much sought after in her youth (*QB*, I, 17) and seems to have had a passionate first marriage. (*MB* 89-90). In Lily's repulsion from that fire which feeds "on the treasure of the house," then, we see the author's repulsion from the grievous effects of sexuality on her treasured mother, who left her, as it were, to rejoin her sexually attractive first husband in the fields of death. But this means that the boating metaphor for the Ramsays' romantic union is suspect, that the vital wholeness between them, the unifying wave of life which joins them, is indeed imperfectly understood, and that there is after all something sentimental and "unreal" about their depiction, something confused, at least, in the author's understanding of what makes for romantic marriage—indeed, something transposed from the Duckworth marriage to the Stephen marriage which doesn't really belong there! But at least she could move into her mother's mind and heart in the compelling first section, and could break through, in the final section, to that moving expression of anger, grief, and love which releases her surrogate to selfless sympathy for parental figures and creative independence for herself. This freed her for a time from her parental ghosts, and released her—not to more deeply romantic marriage with Leonard Woolf—but to the androgynous vision of *Orlando* and to what seems to have been a lesbian affair with Vita Sackville-West (*QB*, II, 116-120, 183). For it was that stronger woman, that true King Mrs. Ramsay, after all, and not that "king in exile" (*TTL* 222), Mr. Ramsay, whom she wanted bodily for herself. That, finally, was what was behind her dread of the novel's sentimental theme. She had become a married spinster, as her mother before her had become a married widow, and like Clarissa Dalloway, could join passion with affection only with another woman, and then only fleetingly, clutchingly, as an exultant adolescent crush, and therefore—as private liberations go—without much "human gain."[14]

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[14] For a much more positive view of the benefits of the Sackville-West affair, see Phyllis Rose, *Woman of Letters: A Life of Virginia Woolf* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 175-193. Rose connects the affair with the period of rebellion and independent growth in which Woolf produced her most important feminist writings. My own skepticism here is confined to the quality of the affair, which does not seem to me to have been between equals. I take it that writing *To the Lighthouse* allowed Virginia to express finally her genuine love for her mother, and so separate it from those confused adolescent yearnings for her which had acquired an erotic dimension since her death—which she was now free to bestow on another maternal (if masculine) woman. Given the adolescent nature of her involvement, it does not seem to me surprising that the affair soon fizzled out. This does not detract from her public heroism and her newfound political maturity at this time; but it does suggest that her sexual and emotional confusions remained unresolved.

WILLIAM E. CAIN*

The Place of the Poet in Jonson's "To Penshurst" and "To My Muse"

Both the critics and the compilers of literary anthologies have long agreed that Jonson's "To Penshurst" (*The Forrest*, II) is one of the poet's best and most representative poems. The reasons for this admiration are clear, and have been stated concisely by Joseph Summers.[1] "To Penshurst," Summers suggests, "creates, simultaneously, a moral ideal and an aesthetic": the clarity and discipline of Jonson's style accord perfectly with the integrity of the Sidneys and the "better markes" of their home. The poem, he adds, is "fundamentally a celebration of an ideal mean and measure—not merely an avoidance of extremes (whether of decoration or riches or emotion or individuality), but an orderly fulfillment of responsible actions within society, within the family, within the time of a human life" (p. 33).

As Summers' commentary implies, Jonson's poem promotes both stylistic and social virtues; when the critics praise the poet's achievement, they celebrate not merely a way of writing, but a way of life—one that they describe as natural or ethically normative, and one to which they feel Jonson lends his explicit support.[2] L. C. Knights, for example, maintains that Penshurst and the other "great houses" were an "integral part of English rural life"; "their owners," he states, "were genuinely in touch with the activities and traditions of the countryside."[3] In Knights's opinion, "To Penshurst" honors a

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[1] Joseph Summers, *The Heirs of Donne and Jonson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

[2] See Philip Hobsbaum, "Ben Jonson in the Seventeenth Century," *Michigan Quarterly Review*, 16 (1977), 405-23: "...Jonson is not only describing a manor but celebrating a way of life" (420).

[3] L. C. Knights, "On the Social Background of Metaphysical Poetry," *Scrutiny*, 13 (1945-46), 37-52. Further page references will be to this essay. See also his influential *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* (1937; rpt. N. Y.: Barnes and Noble, 1968), and, more recently, "Ben Jonson: Public Attitudes and Social Poetry," in *A Celebration of Ben Jonson*, ed. William Blissett, et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), pp. 167-87.

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place " where a variety of living interests were taken for granted, and where men of different bents and occupations could find some common ground " (p. 48). Similarly, Raymond Southall refers to the " natural benevolence " of the way of life evoked in the poem, and praises the poet's " feeling for nature," which is, he explains, "a feeling for human naturalness." [4] Elsewhere, in his *Literature and the Rise of Capitalism*, Southall commends Jonson for his " affirmation of the substantial and essential values." [5] " What the poem so superbly elaborates," he writes, " is a way of life in intimate contact with soil, air, wood, and water, which sustain it with their fruitfulness " (p. 99). " To Penshurst " helps to define Jonson's " measured response to the fundamental things of human life " (p. 100) and his view of the proper relationships among family, community, and society.

Knights' and Southall's commentaries are typical of the praise bestowed on the life that Jonson depicts at Penshurst—its generosity, hospitality, and the " natural " harmony that it fosters among different social classes. But there is at least one exception to this pattern of critical agreement. In *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams argues that critics have " mystified " the poem, erred in admiring its lifestyle, and wrongly attributed a " natural " value to its community.[6] Whatever the collected testimonies to the naturalness or morality of the poem's economy, writes Williams, " there was very little that was moral or natural about it " (p. 37). " To call this a natural order," he claims, is " an abuse of language " (p. 32). Williams' analysis has not been well received (when it has been discussed at all) by Jonson's critics, because it challenges what many other interpretations take for granted. But Williams may be more alert to what is at stake in the poem than are his critical opponents. Jonson's work is vitally concerned with power, authority, and politics, and his attitude towards his poetic craft is far from a secure or natural one. In " To Penshurst," as well as in " To My Muse " (*Epigrammes*, LXV) and in the *Discoveries*, Jonson reveals his ambivalence about the poet's place in society, and also his uncertainty about the language of praise. While he professes his interest in and commitment to society, he is uneasy about its claims on the poet, and is acutely aware that neither social nor poetic issues are subject to an easy settlement.

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[4] Raymond Southall, " Understanding Jonson," *EIC*, 22 (1972), 83-91, at p. 88.

[5] Raymond Southall, *Literature and the Rise of Capitalism*: *Critical Essays Mainly on the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1973), p. 99.

[6] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973).

I.

In a famous section of the poem, Jonson describes the almost magical bounty that nature provides at Penshurst:

> The painted partrich lyes in every field,
> And, for thy messe, is willing to be kill'd.
> And if the high-swolne *Medway* faile thy dish,
> Thou hast thy ponds, that pay thee tribute fish,
> Fat, aged carps, that runne into thy net.
> And pikes, now weary their owne kinde to eat,
> As loth, the second draught, or cast to stay,
> Officiously, at first, themselves betray.
> Bright eeles, that emulate them, and leape on land,
> Before the fisher, or into his hand.
> Then hath thy orchard fruit, thy garden flowers,
> Fresh as the ayre, and new as are the houres.
> The earely cherry, with the later plum,
> Fig, grape, and quince, each in his time doth come:
> The blushing apricot, and wooly peach
> Hang on thy walls, that every child may reach.
> (lines 29-44)[7]

Southall, commenting on these lines, praises their images of the "natural benevolence" that "both sustains and reflects the quality of human life at Penshurst" (p. 100). But for Williams, on the other hand, the "quality of human life" is precisely *not* what the poem describes. In this passage, we see the new "ideology of the country-house," where labor and the *real* "quality" of the workers' lives are significantly omitted:

> The actual men and women who rear the animals and drive them to the house and kill them and prepare them for meat; who trap the pheasants and partridges and catch the fish; who plant and manure and harvest the fruit trees: these are not present; their work is all done for them by a natural order.
> (p. 32)

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[7] Quotations from Jonson's works (excluding the masques) are taken from *Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford and P. and E. M. Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925-52). The poetry and prose are included in volume eight of this edition. Quotations from the masques refer to *Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

Jonson and his critics, Williams explains, "mystify" the country-house economy, and fail to make clear that the laborers themselves produce the feast to which they are later welcomed—much to the announced credit of the Lord's and Lady's generosity. The poem has been emptied of its real social content; it aims to gain our acceptance as the natural way of things, but is in fact the product of a real political attitude that is far from the natural one.

But if Jonson does mystify the economy at Penshurst, he does not appear to be entirely comfortable about his performance. It is hard not to feel some anxiety in these lines from the poem, as the poet introduces potentially disturbing details about life at Penshurst only to displace them *away* from the Sidney family. The reader is allowed extended glimpses of sacrifice, payment of "tribute" (line 32), and even a form of preying on one's "owne kinde," but in a context that regards them as facts which benefit, rather than disrupt or unsettle, the Penshurst society. Suffering, pain, and labor are all presented here, but in a sequence that allows these details both to be seen and immediately neutralized.

Jonson's uneasiness about his act of praise is still more apparent in the next lines:

> And though thy walls be of the countrey stone,
> They are rear'd with no mans ruine, no mans grone,
> There's none, that dwell about them, wish them downe;
> But all come in, the farmer, and the clowne.
> (lines 45-48)

G. R. Hibbard accepts the poet's statement at face value, asserting that "the tenants of the Sidneys are not exploited; the relationship is a reciprocal one of duties and responsibilities on both sides, freely and gladly entered into. The tenants come because they want to, not because they must."[8] David Daiches goes even further, declaring that the poet celebrates not simply a great ideal, but an historical fact: "Jonson's Penshurst really existed as he described it."[9] But what looms large in Jonson's lines is his need to insist so emphatically on the hospitable life at Penshurst. As Richard Newton has recently observed, " one of the most notable characteristics of Jonson's poetic personality " is " his peculiar habit of making negative statements and excluding possibilities and interpretations from his verse, when to all appearances he either is or ought to be making positive assertions and enriching their complexity and depth." [10] This tactic of negation is, as Newton suggests, strikingly evident in " To Penshurst," where the poet continually reassures himself and his reader that this country-house is not like the other ones. The poet stresses the lack of exploitation at Penshurst in order to distinguish it from the negative examples that abound everywhere else: it is important to praise the community at the Sidneys' home, but also imperative to realize that it is the exception, not the rule. The " ruine " and " grone(s)" of the laborers, as well as their desire to rebel against the hierarchy of the country-house (" wish them downe "), may not be directed towards Penshurst, but nevertheless remain present (and threatening) on the poem's margins; repeatedly the poem tries to cordon off the Sidney's home from the misery and waste that lie outside its borders.

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[8] G. R. Hibbard, "The Country-House Poem of the Seventeenth Century," *JWCI*, 19 (1956), 164.

[9] David Daiches. "Politics and the Literary Imagination," in *Liberations: New Essays on the Humanities in Revolution*, ed. Ihab Hassan (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), p. 103.

When, later in the poem, Jonson portrays himself as one of the guests at the feast, he is again anxious to distance the positive from the negative examples. At the Sidneys' banquet,

> the same beere, and bread, and selfe-same wine,
> That is his Lordships, shall be also mine.
> And I not faine to sit (as some, this day,
> At great mens tables) and yet dine away.
> Here no man tells my cups; nor, standing by,
> A waiter, doth my gluttony envy:
> But gives me what I call, and lets me eate.
> (lines 63-69)

As Williams astutely points out, " it is difficult not to feel the relief of that" (p. 30); at Penshurst, the poet is not subject to the pressures and restrictions that operate elsewhere. But Williams then moves too quickly from the poet's presence in these lines to generalize about the economy of the country-house. " Indeed," he writes, " there is more than a hint, in the whole tone of this hospitable eating and drinking, of that easy, insatiable exploitation of the land and its creatures—a prolonged delight in an organized and corporative production and consumption—which is the basis of many early phases of intensive agriculture: the land is rich, and will be made to provide" (p. 30). The problem with this analysis is that Williams, in registering his contempt for an exploitative economics, undervalues the poet's ambivalent feelings towards the scene in which he includes himself. When Jonson says that he shall partake of the same food and drink as his Lord, he intimates not merely his relief at his good fortune, but also evokes those other settings where the poet is allowed to sit but is begrudged the actual meal.[11] Secure at Penshurst, the poet is no longer oppressed by the watchful eye of his social betters and their attendants; he may even indulge his "gluttony," enjoying freedom from the usual restraints on his conduct, and also from the class-bound proprieties that are enforced elsewhere. He is grateful for the pleasures at Penshurst, but is alert to their absence at other country-houses. The positive ideal at Penshurst is defined less by what it is than by what it is not; and the poet's energies are engaged less in specifying the positive than in warding off the forces (and the assumptions about social and political life) that impinge from the outside.

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[10] Richard Newton, " 'Ben./Jonson': The Poet in the Poems," in *Two Renaissance Mythmakers: Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson*, ed. Alvin Kernan (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), pp. 165-95, at p. 166.

While the poet does not protest against the harsh realities of the economic system, his statements are not without some slightly subversive implications:

> Nor, when I take my lodging, need I pray
> For fire, or lights, or livorie: all is there;
> As if thou, then, wert mine, or I raign'd here:
> There's nothing I can wish, for which I stay.
> That found King JAMES, when hunting late, this way.
> (lines 72-76)

Not only does the poet receive the full store of domestic pleasures at Penshurst, but he does so in a way that momentarily bridges the social differences between himself and his Lord. When he tells of the reversal of the poet's and Lord's roles ("as if thou, then, wert mine, or I raign'd here"), he implies his own desire for privilege and security. It is as though he were to appropriate the ownership of Penshurst, and thereby imaginatively reduce the fact of his dependence on an aristocratic supporter. The reference to King James, it might even be argued, arrives in a context that implicitly advances the poet towards an equality of perception, if not of social status, with him—the benefits that the poet enjoys are the same ones "found" and appreciated by the King. Yet even as Jonson indicates the closing of certain distinctions, he struggles against his knowledge that these all too clearly remain. His phrase "there's nothing I can wish" bypasses—and as a result draws our notice to—the elements of fantasy and wish-fulfillment in this passage, which moves forward as a prolonged "as if" (line 74). Jonson's praise of his Lord is wonderfully generous, but perhaps not wholly sanguine in its implications for the poet himself. Sidney's bounty is so great that it is almost "as if" the poet could imagine himself to be a social equal, with comparable material advantages and without the necessity of dependence.

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[11] In *The Country House in English Renaissance Poetry* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1977), William McClung notes a parallel between lines 61-66 of "To Penshurst" and Jonson's complaint to Drummond about the inferior meal that he received from Lord Salisbury in 1607 (see McClung, pp. 9-10). As Levin L. Schücking observes in *The Sociology of Literary Taste*, 1931, trans. Brian Battershaw (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), "the poets of that epoch largely obtained their sustenance in their patrons' castles where they then, at occasional meals, sat 'below the salt', that is to say among the servants; not exactly a place of honour" (p. 13).

When Jonson introduces himself into the scene, he is claiming recognition for the poet's place in society: the poet is a man of worth and dignity, who ought to be accorded the respect of others and welcomed to the communal celebrations, Jonson does not detail the poet's function within the banquet-scene, or within the network or relationships at Penshurst. Instead, we are to accept the poem itself as emblematic of what the poet contributes to his community. He praises the virtues of the family and the ordered society, locates them within an organic framework and rhythm, and, through his own measured act of writing, distances himself from the "Flatterers"—those who, "for their bread," praise "all my oraculous Lord do's or sayes, be it true or false" (*Discoveries*, p. 612).

II.

Williams incisively describes Jonson's "mystifications" in "To Penshurst," but he fails to take account of the poet's own tenuous place in the country-house economy. For nearly all poets in the Renaissance, the patronage system was a grim fact of life, and Jonson was no exception. "Without patronage," writes J. W. Saunders, "a literary profession, of any kind, would have been impossible." [12] The poet's need for financial help—and, on occasion, for protection from censorship and even arrest—obligated him to appeal for some form of aristocratic favor; and it meant that one necessary end of his art was to please his benefactors, invoking familiar conventions designed both to win support and express gratitude.[13] The poet was expected to work through certain rituals of compliment; and, if he wished to keep his patron's favor for his work, he had to conform to the usual poetic procedures while, at the same time, trying to vary them enough to retain his own integrity and individual stamp as a member of the time-honored artistic "profession" (Jonson's term, *Discoveries*, p. 595).[14]

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[12] J. W. Saunders, *The Profession of English Letters* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 50.

For the most part, Jonson fared well under the patronage system, perhaps not as well as Samuel Daniel, but better than many others. He was able to supplement his income through his plays and masques, and also enjoyed the revenue (if irregularly paid) from his poet laureatship and from his appointment in 1628 as city chronologer.[15] But while he was fortunate to receive these benefits, and while he managed more successfully than other writers, he nevertheless fell frequenty into "the Poets Evill, Povertie" ("An Epigram to King Charles," *Underwood*, LXII, ine 6), and was forced, especially late in his career, to beg for support—humbled by "fortune" into taking the "smallest courtesies with thankes" ("An Epistle to Sir Edward Sacvile, now Earle of Dorset," (*Underwood*, XIII, lines 14-15).[16] For a poet with Jonson's temperament and sense of his status as "maker," these continual requests for finances likely proved to be bitter assignments. A writer of his qualities and credentials, he may have felt, should not face the necessity of appealing so abjectly to others, who ought to have recognized his worth without his needing to remind them of it. As Jonson proudly asserts in the fine opening of the poem to Sacvile, he will at least attempt, however pressing the circumstances, to keep his dignity:

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[13] On the patronage system and its poetic conventions, see Phoebe Sheavyn, *The Literary Profession in the Elizabethan Age* (1909; rpt. N. Y.: Haskell House, 1964); E. H. Miller, *The Professional Writer in Elizabethan England: A Study of Nondramatic Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959); Eleanor Rosenberg, *Leichester: Patron of Letters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955); Vernon Hall, *Renaissance Literary Criticism: A Study of Its Social Content* (1945; rpt. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959); and Patricia Thompson, "The Literature of Patronage, 1580-1630," *EIC*, 2 (1952), 267-84.

[14] See Austin Warren and René Wellek, *Theory of Literature*, 3rd ed. (N. Y.: Harvest Books, 1956): ". . . The aristocratic patron is an audience and frequently an exacting audience, requiring not only personal adulation but also conformity to the conventions of his class" (pp. 99-100). The conventions were, in other words, social as well as poetic ones. For more on this point, see McClung, *op. cit.*

[15] Besides the studies previously mentioned, see also John Danby, who, in his *Poets on Fortune's Hill: Sidney, Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), pp. 42-45, describes Jonson's "career" as a "success story" (p. 44).

[16] See also his *Underwood* LVII, LXXI, LXXVI.

> I make
> Yet choyce from whom I take them; and would shame
> To have such doe me good, I durst not name.
> (lines 16-18)

While he may be required to depend upon the charity of others, he will be strict about choosing the people from whom he will accept it.

In several long passages in his *Discoveries*, Jonson broods on the meager rewards paid to poets, and he reveals his bitterness at a system that treats the best craftsmen with little appreciation and respect. " Nothing in our age," Jonson declares, " is more preposterous " than the deference accorded to inept writers, whose works are not even worthy to use in lighting " Tabacco " (pp. 581-82). The poets, he adds, who receive the highest praise (" almost nam'd for Miracles ") are " so vile, that if a man should goe about, to examine, and correct them, hee must make all they have done, but one blot." Jonson feels both amazement and contempt at the spectacle of bad poets rewarded by " the Ignorant," and his bitterness is at times so great that it edges into a kind of horrified exuberance. " A man," he explains, " Cannot imagine that thing so foolish, or rude, but will find, and enjoy an Admirer; at least, a Reader, or Spectator " (p. 582). In Jonson's view, the gullibility of the public knows no bounds. However silly or corrupt the artist's imagination, he can rest assured that he will always find and profit from an audience.

" Indeed," Jonson elsewhere writes, " Nothing is of more credit, or request now, than a petulant paper, or scoffing verses; and it is but convenient to the times and manners wee live with, to have then the worst writings, and studies flourish, when the best begin to be despise'd. Ill Arts begin, where good end " (pp. 571-72). When men and the times are evil, inferior kinds of writing and reading prosper. The poet who values " good things " discovers that others " envie," rather than admire and encourage, his labors. As Herford and Simpson point out, Jonson's attack on bad poets, vulgar readers, envy, and calumny is taken from passages in Scaliger's *Confutatio Stultissimae Burdonum*

Fabulae (see *H & S*, XI, p. 221). But Jonson makes one important change in Scaliger's text: when he describes the evils and abuses of the age, he singles out the poet as the person who is victimized most of all.

In Jonson's judgment, the more careful the craftsman, the more likely it is that his work will be disregarded and the rewards distributed elsewhere:

> *Poetry*, in this latter age, hath prov'd but a meane *Mistresse*, to such as have wholly addicted themselves to her, or given their names up to her family. They who have but saluted her on the by, and now and then tendred their visits, shee hath done much for, and advanced in the way of their owne professions (both the *Law*, and the *Gospel*) beyond all they could have hoped, or done for themselves, without her favour. (p. 583)

The mistress "Poetry" favors men who practice their art occasionally, while passing by those who dedicate themselves completely to her. By a painful logic, she attends most charitably to writers who *refuse* to serve her as a vocation and career. In this way, Jonson explains, "Poetry"

> doth emulate the judicious, but preposterous bounty of the times *Grandes*: who accumulate all they can upon the *Parasite*, or *Fresh-man* in their friendship; but thinke an old Client, or honest servant, bound by his place to write, and starve. (p. 583)

"Bounty" is given to the parasite or sponge, but is withheld from the honest servant or client. The appropriate rewards for loyalty lie merely in observing one's place and in starving as social distinctions seem to dictate. According to Jonson, who makes his point with bitter irony, the honest writer and servant should assume that poverty and mistreatment run in the natural course of things.[17]

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[17] Herford and Simpson note Sir John Davies, Bishop Joseph Hall, and Donne as three examples of writers who worked in "the Law" or "Gospel" (XI, p. 230). Jonson seems sometimes to have regretted that he spent his career entirely—and mostly unprofitably— as a professional poet. Drummond, for instance, records that Jonson "dissuaded me from Poetrie, for that she had beggered him, when he might have been a rich Lawyer, Physitian or Marchant" (I, p. 149). In *Neptune's Triumph for the Return of Albion* (1624), Jonson implies his doubt about whether "poetry" is regarded as a full-fledged profession. Responding to the Cook's question, "What are you, sir?", the Poet answers: "The most unprofitable of his servants, I, sir, the poet. A kind of Christmas ingine, one that is used at least once a year for a trifling instrument of wit, or so" (lines 18-21).

III.

The poet's place in his society carries special burdens, as the passages in *Discoveries* and " To Penshurst " illustrate. But perhaps the most dramatic example of these pressures on the poet occurs in " To My Muse," which, in its concern for the problem of writing and the poet's relation to his text, supplements the social and economic factors that we have emphasized in Jonson's other work. " To My Muse " is preceded by two poems in praise of Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, which commend his " true worth " (LXIII, line 12) and honor him for his service to the state. The opening lines of " To My Muse " stand in clear juxtaposition to these earlier patterns of praise:

Away, and leave me, thou thing most abhord,
That hast betray'd me to a worthlesse lord;
Made me commit most fierce idolatrie
To a great image through thy luxurie.
(lines 1-4)

The poet's anxiety arises from his awareness that when he praises true worth, he may really be substituting the *rhetoric* of true worth for worthlessness; his lord may not possess the virtues celebrated in his poetic text. The lines are directed at the Muse, " away " from the poet; he locates the blame for his idolatry outside himself, and suggests that the responsibility for misplaced praise lies with the Muse who has " betray'd " him, " made " him an idolator. In these opening lines, the poet faces a crisis of reference and vocation. His praise does not refer to a man who truly deserves it, but to a false image; his Muse, rather than serving as his source of power and inspiration, misleads him—she cannot be relied upon to guide the poet towards acts of praise that accurately refer to men in the world; and the poet's relation to his craft is unsettled, for if his Muse is false, and if his poems of praise refer falsely, then what kinds of poems can he hope to write in the future?

" To My Muse " is very much a crisis poem, which confronts a disjunction between the poet's rhetoric of praise and that which he praises. Harold Bloom's note on the etymology of " crisis " is helpful:

> A crisis is a crucial point or turning point, going back to the Greek *krisis*, which derived from *krinein*, " to separate " or " to decide," from which come also the Greek *kritos*, " separated " or " chosen," and so *kritikos*, " able to discern,"

> and so to be a critic. The Indo-European root is *skeri* "to cut, separate, sift," from which stem such allied words as scribble, script, and hypocrisy, as well as crisis and critic.[18]

As a crisis poem, "To My Muse" records a separation between the poet's language and the man that the poet praises. "Crisis" also implies a decision about the poet's vocation and career—his effort to discern what should be his attitude towards writing, now that his Muse has proven false and his poetry exposed as a praising of false images.

These issues of vocation and career are taken up in the next lines of the poem:

> Be thy next masters more unluckie *Muse*,
> And, as thou hast mine, his houres, and youth abuse.
> Get him the times long grudge, the courts ill will;
> And, reconcil'd, keepe him suspected still.
> Make him loose all his friends; and, which is worse,
> Almost all wayes, to any better course.
> (lines 5-10)

The poet complains that his Muse has abused him, and cost him the loss of friends, the suspicion (if not the outright "ill will") of the Court, and, still more seriously, deprived him of other possible careers (some "better course"). As Edward Said reminds us, "for any author," his vocation and the shape of his career are central concerns; "his writing life is what sets him off from the normal quotidian element."[19] In In Jonson's poem, however, the poet is different from other men not because he has been deprived of what other men enjoy (friendship) or else do not need to fear (the enmity of the Court); he emphasizes the poet's losses, which are not seen as sacrifices for some greater gain. In "To Penshurst," Jonson enlists himself in the good community, and finds a place for himself at the Sidney's banquet. But in "To My Muse," he is isolated from others, and his practice as a writer is judged as idolatry. He not only fixes the blame for his condition elsewhere, but even indulges in depicting (and finding a grim pleasure in) the sorry fate of the next poet that the Muse will visit.

These crises of reference, vocation, and career of course raise a further problem: how will the poet manage to produce texts in the future, and what kind of role will he envision for himself as a writer? The next lines at first seem to suggest that the poet has found an alternative:

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[18] Harold Bloom, "Poetic Crossing: Rhetoric and Psychology," *Georgia Review*, 30 (1976), 519.

[19] Edward Said, "Notes on the Characterization of a Literary Text," *MLN*, 85 (1970), 772.

> With me thou leav'st an happier *Muse* then thee,
> And which thou brough'st me, welcome povertie.
> Shee shall instruct my after-thoughts to write
> Things manly, and not smelling parasite.
> (lines 11-14)

The first line encourages the reader to believe that the poet's condition is secure; he can freely indict his old " abhord " Muse, since he now finds his authority in a " happier " one. But the next line explains that this new Muse is the product of the former one, and is another kind of lack or deprivation—poverty. No longer will the poet live parasitically on another; " povertie " will instruct him in the " manly " art of self-reliance.

" To My Muse " could have ended with the bitter humor of lines eleven through fourteen. But instead the poet closes by reversing his attitude towards his Muse:

> But I repent me: Stay. Who e're is rais'd,
> For worth he has not, He is tax'd, not prais'd.
> (lines 15-16)

The poet repents for wishing to drive away his Muse, but the interesting point here is the limit that he sets on his repentance. He does not accept responsibility for praising men who do not deserve this praise; nor does he attempt to resolve the problem of reference that occurs when the poet's language does not indicate (cannot be taken as a sign for) true worth. The responsibility rests neither with the poet nor his Muse, but with the men who are falsely " rais'd " for worthy they do not possess. When the poet praises an undeserving man, such a man is " tax'd." " Tax " comes from the Latin word " taxare, " which means touch sharply, rate, appraise, charge, or censure. As this complex of meanings implies, the poet's praise measures or appraises the man: if he is undeserving, then the poet's words will reveal the gap between actual worth (or worthlessness) and the language of compliment. The poet's rhetoric may fail to apply truly to the man that he praises, but this no longer suggests a crisis in reference. Instead, the failure in reference exposes and censures the undeserving man;

even when the poet's praise fails to refer accurately, it still serves to measure worth by calling attention to the distinction between praise and merit. While the poet's praise may fail to find a proper referent, it succeeds in revealing the man who does not deserve such praise.

The final two lines of the poem include three verbs in the passive voice; and again the poet does not address the question of his own complicity. Earlier, the fault lay with his Muse; now, if the blame attaches to any one, it rests with other men. This failure to deal with the poet's responsibility may prove disquieting to the reader, but be necessary for the poet. By ending his poem in this way, the poet produces a necessary fiction: the fault always lies elsewhere, outside himself. Such an ending allows him both to retain his relation to his Muse (she is not at fault after all), and enables him to write other poems (he is not at fault either). The ending is a successful one in that it holds off more disturbing questions: what would result if the poet bears full responsibility for his language of praise? and what course would remain for him if his Muse is truly unfaithful? The close of Jonson's poem defends the poet against these questions: by refusing to consider them it opens up the possibility for writing to continue. "To My Muse" is a powerful and revealing poem, because it suggests the issues and pressures that confront the poet who is bound to praise another man, and also indicates a way through which the poet may succeed in guarding against their force. "To Penshurst" allows us to see some of the social and economic facts of the poet's situation, while, more locally and intensely, "To My Muse" shows how the poet's obligation to praise others—who may not merit his words—disturbs his efforts to write.

The career of the professional poet during the Renaissance appears to have been a precarious one; and Jonson's self-esteem and devotion to his work likely led him to resent his economic plight, his dependence on others, and his need to secure his text against the possibility that its praise may not match the man. As the *Discoveries* and the poetry make clear, Jonson believes that the poet must be a diligent laborer and worker. The poet practices a craft, which resembles (though it is more noble than) other types of labor, such as "Tillage, Spinning, Weaving, Building"; he is more exalted than these others, because his craft is not the work "of every hand," but "of the braine only, and those the most generous, and exalted wits, and spirits that cannot rest, or acquiesce" (*Discoveries*, p. 568). But the poet is like other men in that he must engage in hard and constant work: " The mind of man is still fed with labour " (p. 568). " To My Muse " is only one of the many poems in which Jonson refers to his Muse; but his concern for his Muse and for guidance and authority, should not be taken to imply that the poet, in Jonson's view, is merely an instrument or passive agent for someone else. As Jonson writes in his poem to Shakespeare, (*Ungathered Verse*, XXVI), the poet must practice art as well as profit from nature:

> For though the *Poets* matter, Nature be,
> His Art doth give the fashion. And, that he,
> Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,
> (Such as thine are) and strike the second heat
> Upon the *Muses* anvile: turne the same,
> (And himselfe with it) that he thinke to frame;
> Or for the lawrell, he may gaine a scorne,
> For a good *Poet's* made, as well as borne.
> (lines 57-64)

The poet engages in the rigorous practice of his art, and is committed to more than following Nature or obeying the Muse's inspiration. To the " perfection of Nature in our *Poet*," Jonson observes in his *Discoveries*, " we require Exercise of those parts, and frequent ":

> If his wit will not arrive soddainly at the dignitie of the Ancients, let him not yet fall out with it, quarrell, or be over-hastily Angry: offer, to turne it away from Study, in a humor; but come to it againe upon better cogitation; try an other time, with labour. . . . Indeed, things, wrote with labour, deserve to be so read, and will last their Age.
> (pp. 637-38)

As this and other passages suggest, it is a mistake to speak simply of the poet's "mystifications " of an economic system. The poet serves the internal economy of his craft, as he acknowledges (and somehow takes account of) the demands of his society. In their different ways, " To Penshurst," " To My Muse," and the *Discoveries* testify to Jonson's complex relation to his art and its function in the community. The poet is implicated in a system of patronage which will, he hopes, reward him for his labor, but which may also require him to praise the undeserving—to practice his craft, in other words, against his better knowledge and higher aspirations.

EUGENE L. STELZIG*

The Aesthetics of Confession: Hermann Hesse's "Crisis" Poems in the Context of the "Steppenwolf" Period

> For at least a year now I have been in the worst crisis of my life, and I still hope even now that it will not pass, but break my neck instead, because I am sick of life to the point of throwing up.
> Hesse in a letter of 1926

I

What is possible, for poetry, today? The question is so formidable that it seems forever to defer a palpable answer, one that would be in any sense definitively or philosophically considered. Shrinking back from such an overwhelming vista, I turn to Hermann Hesse's radically self-confronting poetry of the twenties, which raises fundamental aesthetic issues that have only found a tortured resonance in the American poetic scene of the sixties and seventies, in the work of some of the leading confessional poets, such as the later Lowell, Plath, Berryman, and a host of others of whose work it is yet too early to say whether it is merely trendy and epigonal, or whether it carries a genuine poetic charge that can ground a future poetry. Hesse's hard-won ideal, during his forties, of an unflinching autobiographical art—*Kunst als Bekenntnis*—can fructify in a concrete and perhaps exemplary fashion our meditation on the possibilities of poetry today, a stark poetry of the here and now that doesn't cower in the face of chaos in the borrowed robes of a timid formalism, but gives chaos itself a veritable voice and shape.

II

In the poem-cycle, *Crisis: Pages from a Diary (Krisis: Ein Stück Tagebuch)* published by Fischer in a limited edition of 1150 copies in April 1928, Hesse's confessional aesthetic of the twenties finds its most acute, forthright realization in a lyrical mode that is as coura-

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geous (as Heinrich Wiegand praised it in his review in *Kulturwille*[1]) as it seems to be unmediated by an artistic persona. This lack of a recognizable mask is the difference between *Crisis* and *Steppenwolf*, so that the critic is tempted to label the former *life* and the latter *art*, as Ralph Freedman does when he notes that *Crisis* is not, like *Steppenwolf*, " filtered through a transforming process of the literary imagination."[2] But the apparent absence of an aesthetically distancing filter is not necessarily a defect once we are willing to grant Hesse the freedom of his own premises in the poem-journal. What Freedman sees in the balance as a minus I credit as a plus of authenticity in the abrasive self-encounter of *Crisis*, which is an unvarnished life-study—although there is a good deal of mediation by way of form and style, as I will try to show—so that the stark verse-diary is to be valued in its own right, to quote its author, as " the frankest poet's confession since Heine."[3] I do not want to take the perverse tack of arguing that *Crisis* is better than the novel, but rather to examine it on its own ground in relationship to the *Steppenwolf* years as a whole, instead of reducing it to the status of raw material for the fictional frame of *Steppenwolf*, a line of reasoning by which the poems are swallowed up by the novel.

Hesse did not wish the lyrics to be thus liquidated, but to guarantee their independent existence as a cycle. In a letter of 1928 he explains the fact of a limited edition as a strategic move to preserve the poems' integrity: " I found no other way to assure the existence of this poem-cycle so that it cannot be lost any more, and to protect it at the same time from the popular craving for fashion and sensation."[4] He was almost embarrassed by the sensational success of *Steppenwolf*, and he wanted *Crisis* to be available only to the happy few who could appreciate its genuine meaning and intention beneath the shocking surface. He didn't want this intimate little tome to fall into *too* many wrong hands, because to state the paradox as succinctly as possible, his turn to a confessional aesthetics contained within it a strong reservation about the ultimate value of confession as art: to be published in a large edition, "these poems are not objective enough . . . are too much confession and momentary notice."[5] And at the same time, he felt that the only thing that mattered to him as an artist was confession, in a variety of forms, and whatever its ultimate worth. Contrasting himself with the "aesthetically irreproachable poets," Hesse announces the ironic credo of the *Steppenwolf* period, confession at any cost: "As far as I am concerned, I don't count in that regard any more; I have already abandoned the aesthetic ambition years ago and write not poetry (Dichtung) but confession (Bekenntnis), in the same way that someone who is drowning or who has been poisoned does not concern himself with the cut of his hair or the modulation of his voice, but simply screams out."[6] And *Crisis* is the purest expression of Hesse's aesthetics of the scream, decades before that ungodly sound began to make itself heard in American poetry, and at first in the Beat poets, especially Allen Ginsberg.

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[1] 1928 n.d., reprinted in *Materialen zu Hermann Hesses 'Der Steppenwolf,'* ed. Volker Michels (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1972), pp. 306-309. Throughout this paper all translations of material quoted from *Materialen* are mine.

[2] "*Person* and *Persona*: The Magic Mirrors of *Steppenwolf*," in *Hesse*: *A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Theodore Ziolkowski (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1973), p. 165.

[3] Letter of October 1928, *Materialen*, p. 134.

[4] *Materialen*, p. 134.

With the publication in 1975 of Ralph Manheim's spirited, freewheeling translation into English of *Crisis*, the English-speaking reader has now for the first time available to him (with the exception of the letters, and some fragments and journal entries) all the texts of Hesse's troubled but protean *Steppenwolf* phase—or to use his favorite word here, *incarnation*—which opens with the 1922 fragment, "From the Journal of One Who Has Been Derailed" ("Aus dem Tagebuch Eines Entgleisten"), a pre-study, as Hesse describes it, to the novel,[7] and which closes in 1928 with the Kafka-influenced short-story, "Concerning the Steppenwolf." The major works that lie between these boundaries—*A Guest at the Spa* (1924), *Steppenwolf* (1927), *The Journey to Nuremberg* (1927), and, of course, *Crisis*—reflect the complex psychography of Hesse as Steppenwolf and outsider (he repeatedly uses the English word in his letters) suffering from a severely divided self or "schizomania" as Harry Haller has it, from suicidal despair concerning the fate of the poet in the modern world, and finally, from an uncontrollable oscillation or "pendulation" (to use Ziolkowski's term[8]) between the worlds of *Geist* (mind/spirit) and *Natur*

[5] Letter of June 1928, *Materialen*, pp. 131-132.
[6] Letter of October 1926 to Heinrich Wiegand, *Materialen*, p. 97.
[7] Quoted by Volker Michels in *Materialen*, p. 39.
[8] In his discussion of the light and dark worlds of *Demian* in *Hermann Hesse: A Study in Theme and Structure* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), p. 96.

(senses/instincts), which is also a conflict between the masculine and feminine sides of Hesse's psyche. The multifarious self-division which afflicted Hesse was such that no degree of magical thinking could help him to a synthesis, not even "that airy bridge," humor, "the old mediator between the ideal and the real," the "crystal that grows only in deep and enduring pain."[9] For even humor, of which he asked so much in the twenties, and which he tried to cultivate in works that are essentially unfunny, save for some sublimely grotesque moments in *Steppenwolf*, is a compromising mediation, and thus a bridge back to the bourgeois structure of values that he struggled to reject and that he recognized as a mode founded on the lukewarm middle, safe from all extremes where *Geist* and *Natur* act out their pure destinies. The striving for humor in *Journey to Nuremburg* and *Guest at the Spa* is indeed so heavy-handed, mawkish and hypochondriacally self-indulgent that only Hesse's desperate wish for some kind of bridge away from the abyss can even begin to account for the genesis of these strange works. But in *Crisis* and *Steppenwolf*, so different in form and content, yet so intimately bound up in a symbiotic relationship, his ambivalence is bodied forth in a laughter that in the former is at times purely nihilistic, and that in the latter points altogether beyond the bourgeois dilemma to the crystallized indifference of the Immortals, a goal which the novel can only adumbrate, and that is provisionally reached in *Journey to the East* and *The Glass Bead Game* with a resolution of the masculine/feminine split by way of mortifying *Natur* or the Eternal Mother. I say provisional, because the *magna mater* refuses to let herself be killed off, as we can see when Josef Knecht, the Magister Ludi, obeying the self-willed call of awakening or "Stufen," leaves the Castalian realm of a senescent *Geist* to plunge into the mountain lake at dawn, the amniotic fluid at the beginning of things, the maternal *Urquelle* that is at one and the same time the death-dealer and the baptismal font of life of the spirit grown weary of ntself.

III

The sexual leap into the lap of the eternal feminine, the return to the maternal matrix also constitutes the primary psychological gesture and *Bildungs*-program of the confession that is *Crisis*. The poem-cycle mirrors the psychomachia in Hesse's life cycle between eros and intellect, with eros—for this is what the forty-eight year-old writer has come to—as the appointed, necessary good. Extreme simplicity of style and content in *Crisis* masks the authentic complexity of a self that is absurdly yet courageously seeking to achieve some measure of reintegration through mortification and self-surrender of the intellect. The first surrender, however, is that of the purgation or voiding of confession itself, the will to truth concerning who one is, no matter how repulsive or unflattering that truth may be. Confession as exhibition: in Rousseau the act is literal, as the exhibition of confession is partly a confession of self-exhibition; in *Crisis* it is a venture to expose those areas of the self that have been most repressed because they are most unpalatable and infamous to a bourgeois sense of what life and art ought to be.

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[9] *Journey to Nuremberg*, in *Autobiographical Writings*, ed. T. Ziolkowski, trans. Denver Lidley (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1971), pp. 206, 178.

How far does Hesse carry this self-exposure in *Crisis?* Not quite far enough to suit his punctilious standards for frankness, because he feels constantly constrained by conventions of prurience that a middle-class reading public imposes on its authors. His postscript to the collection is a curiously hedging document, being both offensive and defensive, affronting and apologetic. Hesse wants to keep his audience's sympathy in the very act of cutting away the ground of sympathy on which a middle-class audience can stand, and the poet ends up in a a sense shadow-boxing with the philistine censor in himself. His psychic need is to explain so as to mollify: the poems reflect the fear of ageing and death of a man close to fifty, and not merely by way of a violent reassertion of too-long stifled instincts, but as a crisis-stage of middle age when the spirit grows weary of itself and yearns to abdicate to nature and chaos. The task is literally a life-saving counterswerve from Hesse as Saint Siddhartha, and a turn to unsuccessfully sublimated impulses that have been either silenced altogether or prettified in his earlier works, and that are now allowed to come to voice under the moral aegis of *Aufrichtigkeit*: *Crisis* as therapy, and hopefully a more effective one than the expensive thermal cures in Baden. Although Hesse is more than willing to engage in vigorous sessions of self-hatred, he is still dependent on the love of his audience, which itself is a synecdoche or psychic trope for the first audience of man-as-actor:

> Once a man takes honesty as his ideal, he cannot confine himself to showing the pleasant and reasonable side of his

> nature. The other side is there. I must even admit that my honesty in this respect is flawed, for I have omitted from this book a number of poems publication of which would have been too damaging to my self-esteem.
>
> Dear friends, I attach no importance to your judgment. But I set great store by your love. Continue to love me, even if you do not approve of my poems.[10]

The hidden addressee is Hesse's mother, now long-dead, and the plea re-enacts the plea of Hermann Hesse the self-willed child, adolescent, and fledgling author, whose disturbing acts and words were in a sense always a repeated, extreme testing of that infinite lode of mother-love—the prayer of the child in all of us, forever poignant: love me even if you do not approve of me.

The opening lyric of *Crisis* offers both a dedication and a program as the poet surrenders himself, turns or returns to the " Urmutter " to find in her embrace both salvation and the ecstatic release of eros fulfilled, an ultimate letting-go. Here, as later at the conclusion of *Narcissus and Goldmund*, the man re-enters the Eden of childhood in a sexual embrace with the eternal mother, to be consummated in and consumed by her kiss—Hesse's own myth of the Romantic *Liebestod*, via the family romance. The sensuous recovery of the original ground of being is an ambiguous rite of passage—life-giving and suicidal—because adult intellect and selfhood are surrendered, but a primal unity is regained through the incestuous death-swoon. The double-dealing character of this embrace which kills and renews is further enhanced by the fact that inherent in the reunion is not a return pure and simple, since it contains also a wish to violate the mother. There can be no innocent entry into the shadow realm of origins by the adult poet, and even though the explicit recognition of the sexual union as a violation of the mother as well as of the self is only implicit in " Dedication " (*Hingabe*, which also means a giving-of-oneself), a number of other lyrics make quite explicit the ferocity of the erotic urge in terms of violence against the self as well as the other.

Thus self-murder and the crime of passion are two leading, linked wish-images of *Crisis*. The poet's craving for death finds various expressions, from naked assertions of the wish itself, to grotesque fantasies of killing the enemy in his own breast (" In Vain," p. 55), being crucified ("Intimations," p. 95), or run over, fate of fates, by the car of a Catholic baker ("The Drunken Poet," p. 105). Correspondingly, the sadistic urge to murder the beloved, which figures also as the high or low point of *Steppenwolf*'s Magic Theatre sequence with the stabbing of the sleeping Hermine, is given a prominent place in the poetry, as the speaker thinks of strangling his nubile young partners after intercourse ("Poet's Death Song," p. 5) or even in the moment of passion ("The Debauchee," p. 87), and as he confesses to having stabbed to death his beloved, Erika Maria Ruth ("With These Hands," p. 115)—in fact, Hesse's second, much-younger wife, whose marriage to him was short-lived and ill-sorted, and ended, not in murder, but in the divorce courts.

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[10] *Crisis: Pages from a Diary*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1975), " Postscript to My Friends," pp. 119-121.

Lest this catalogue of passionate misdeeds should prove too revolting, let me quickly add that it is presented for the most part through a high-gloss veneer of grotesque and sardonic humor, as a sort of farcical confessional fantasia. The intended effect of the humor is to stylize and distance such shocking imaginings; yet the humor, because of its biting, sardonic edge, is not exactly comforting or reassuring as the author holds the mirror up to the psychopathology of his everyday life. Like Baudelaire, Hesse is still (perversely) as much of a moralist as a nihilist or sensualist here, because in some measure he is working to get the reader—*mon semblable, mon frère*—to face up to the hidden monsters in his own breast. *Crisis* as a comic catharsis moves from fantastic confession to a purgation of the sick soul of the modern European insofar as Hesse feels that the psychic derangement of the artist holds a larger meaning for the society in which he lives: "the neurosis of a man of spirit is simultaneously a symptom of the soul of the time."[11]

Hesse in his *Steppenwolf* incarnation was acutely aware that one of the chief afflictions of middle-class culture is its denial or sentimental euphemizing of the instinctual basis of human life, to which the artist in pursuit of *Geist* is also particularly susceptible. The insight, of course, is almost a commonplace in the advanced circles of the twenties, when coming in the wake of Freud, such major artists as D. H. Lawrence made it over into the substance of their best-known works, and Hesse himself only came to it belatedly after undergoing psychoanalysis. But he felt it with a peculiar force, not merely because it helped him to cast off once and for all the last vestiges of the Protestant-Pietist mentality on which his childhood and youth were fed, and against which he struggled from early adolescence on, but especially because it helped him to redefine the aesthetic principle, or the relationship between life and art, experience and poetry. In an essay on Hölderlin written near the beginning of the *Steppenwolf* period, he posits that the poet's mental collapse was rooted in an unsuccessful sublimation of ordinary instincts: " He cultivated in himself a spirituality that did violence to his nature."[12] Behind Hesse's self-conscious dedication to the realm of the mother and of the senses we may discern his insight about Hölderlin as a representative cautionary figure impelling him, by way of negative example, to hazard in poetry the journey (as he puts it in the *Crisis* Epilogue) into " nature, chaos, and animal instinct " and to come to voice " this darker, perhaps deeper half of life " (p. 119) that he knows now had either been silenced or dressed up in borrowed finery in his earlier works. As Wiegand wrote in his 1928 review, here " nothing is beautified or silenced which governs most unspiritually below the navel." Wiegand praises this as a courageous act, and observes further how rare it is for an older writer to make such a disconcerting departure from his earlier works: " Radical youth doesn't signify much, as every sort of history will show. Revolutionary age is dangerous. Rebellious youth: normal. Revolutionizing age: deranged (verrückt)." [13] Although the reviewer's remark is apt because in the course of ageing most artists seem to pursue a path of retrenchment into and a further refinement of their most representative modes, there are always major exceptions, in art as well as life, as the famous example of the older Tolstoy, who raged in old age like a Russian Lear of the steppes, will show. But a glance at the decades supervening since Wiegand's comments may intimate to us that Hesse's way here may not be merely a brave divagation, but may prove to have been exemplary as far as the development of at least some major modern writers is concerned. Did not Yeats, roughly half a decade after *Crisis*, turn his back on the mosaic-like ideal of perfection of Byzantium, the artifice of eternity, to return full-force to " the fury and the mire of of human veins," and proceed to amaze his public in the thirties with the erotic wisdom of the incorrigible Crazy Jane, that " Fair and foul are near of kin,/And fair needs foul." And what of Lowell's breakthrough, in middle age, to a personal idiom and a vigorous poetic confession after the studied, opaque formalism and the mannered impersonality of his much-praised verse in the modernist vein?

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[11] Letter of October 1926 to Hugo Ball, *Materialen*, p. 97.

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[12] " On Hölderlin " (1924), in *My Belief: Essays on Life and Art*, ed. T. Ziolkowski, trans. D. Lidley (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1974), p. 128.

[13] *Materialen*, p. 306.

IV

What enables a major writer to take a radical departure in mid-career? I have already touched upon Hesse's psychoanalysis as an important element, one that I would like to consider now in a little more detail in relation to his artistic development from the end of World War I to the *Steppenwolf* years. In Hesse's case, the turn in later middle age to a piquant confessional aesthetic can be seen in a sense as a delayed reaction to his earlier reading of the works of Freud, Jung and Stekel, and to the extended sessions with the Jungian analyst, Josef B. Lang, during the distressing situation of the war years when his literary and personal life fell into ruins because of his outspoken opposition to the war, the mental breakdown of his wife and the subsequent dissolution of his family. In a 1918 essay on " Artists and Psychoanalysis " (for which he received a polite acknowledgement from Freud), he lists as one of the major benefits of analysis for the artist that it demands a " truthfulness toward oneself to which we are not accustomed," and adds, revealingly, that such honesty " at the very outset of analysis is a powerful, indeed a monstrous experience, a shock that reaches to the root of one's being." [14] The initial result of this extensive shock is that it made it possible for Hesse to emerge at the end of the war as a new writer—literally so, pseudonymized as Emil Sinclair—with *Demian*, the novel that came, under great pressure and rather pell-mell, out of his experience of analysis, and that curiously enough caught the mood of a new post-war generation with a heady welter of Jungian symbolism. The hypnotic appeal of *Demian*, attested to by Thomas Mann, among other German intellectuals, is that the young men returned from the front were no longer enamored of public rhetoric and collective solutions, but willing to hearken to the inner voice, especially in the prophetic mystification and *clair-obscur* of a novel that was sufficiently compelling yet confusing to accommodate the private fantasies of a large number of readers. However, *Demian*, despite all of its psychic storms and stress, did not reach far enough for Hesse, at least from the perspective of a decade later: its author was unable to deal forthrightly with the strong erotic drives that stirred darkly in his imagination, especially in relation to mother figures, and which he rendered harmless through idealizing (Beatrice) and mythic (Frau Eva) character archetypes. When in 1919 Hesse settled down in Montagnola to the life of an ascetic recluse, the prolonged contemplation of his own psyche resulted in fictions whose " incarnations " begin to approximate more closely the erotic and anarchic currents that ran beneath the surface. *Siddhartha* (1919-1922), his semi-autobiographical saint's life by way of Indian romance is strongly idealizing and idyllic, but at least the romantic asceticism of Siddhartha as Samana is counterbalanced by his entry into the world of the senses and passion in the liaison with the courtesan Kamala. But the delectable love-goddess is largely a poeticized Indian paradise-dream; ultimately remote from Hesse's inner experience. Only in the contemporaneous *Klingsor's Last Summer* and *Klein and Wagner* (1920) does Hesse begin to focus more frankly–and shockingly—on the true character of his passionate drives with the portraits under a Southern sun of the painter Klingsor during his last summer of erotic, Dionysian intoxication, and Klein, the petty bureaucrat who takes the daring step (thus the name symbolism) of breaking with his marriage and career to plunge into the demi-monde of crime and sensuality. And in the remarkable (and neglected) short-story, *A Child's Soul*, Hesse for the first time faces explicitly the Oedipal stresses of his childhood without cloaking or distorting them with romantic Jungian archetypes. Hesse's frank version of the Freudian family romance here takes us to the threshold of—and makes possible— the new, exacting, and largely unromantic confessional aesthetic that he elaborates during the twenties, and that for my purposes here can be typified by his statement in 1928 on the artist's vocation: "[he] doesn't have the job of forging an idiom for any generally accepted world-view, but to express as forcefully . . . as possible his own, unique fashion of living and experiencing."[15] This is Hesse's personalist creed, to be contrasted with the modernist accent on impersonality prevailing in European and especially Anglo-American poetry. The monstrous shock attendant upon undergoing psychoanalysis had tranformed Hesse as a writer by way of a belated but fundamental insight in his forties into the basis of his instinctual life; thus toward the end of the *Steppenwolf* phase it is so grounded in his artistic outlook that he is now able to redefine the aesthetic principle itself in generic terms that reach far beyond the modernist impersonality theories that were to dominate English and American poetics for several decades more.

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[14] *My Belief*, p. 49.

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[15] Letter of February 1928 to Cuno Amiet, *Materialen*, p. 126.

In addition to Hesse's earlier encounter with psychoanalysis, there is at work as well in his changed aesthetic outlook the nihilism and spiritual acedia that afflicted him enormously during the *Steppenwolf* years. The mood of suicidal despair, nausea, and disgust at oneself and one's world is of course a normative characteristic of the literature that emerged after World War II, and many leading modernists gave compelling expression to it during the twenties and thirties—indeed, the literature of despair has been with us so insistently since that for a major contemporary writer the virtues of a genuinely-founded cheerfulness might be something of a new discovery. Harry Haller's consoling resolve (which was Hesse's own, as the letters show) to have an accident with his razor at the age of fifty if he can't get out from under the burden of life-in-death has been acted out in actual life by many poets since. Hesse was particularly burdened by a sense of the worthlessness of modern literature, and the futility of artistic creation and of any higher spiritual or intellectual striving in a world where the commercial values of the market place, having pre-empted other faiths, brand all such pursuits as pitiable delusions. In such a world the artist is a wolf of the steppes, an outsider come to it from another plane of being who can only watch in stunned despair as he realizes that all he holds dear has no legitimate currency in this hard, material realm. Perhaps at such a time the serious writer too is a fallen creature; his work at worst pointless, at best problematic. "I don't think anything of the whole of today's German literature, my own, naturally, included" is the refrain that echoes through the correspondence of the *Steppenwolf* decade, and that reaches its low point in an epistle of 1926 with the querulous plaint:

> It doesn't go well . . . I can't escape this filthy mess any more. The inner resistance is lacking, the will to health and to keeping on. I'm fed up, and feel the increasing paralysis of my powers bitterly. It started during the war, with the collapse, with fatherland, public morality, etc., then came the collapse of the family, the increasing loneliness (my second wife hasn't been to Montagnola in two years), then slowly came the most difficult: the insight into the worthlessness of my intellectual and literary labors. That is to say, I believe I don't underestimate the relative worth of my talent and my

> mental world as measured against the contemporary average —but the time is pursuing other goals, and the collapse of the spirit in favor of other life-values renders the work and striving of someone like us a pure illusion—we might just as well be blowing soap-bubbles.[16]

The feelings here voiced privately and informally are part of the spiritual malaise that tortured the best minds between the two great wars, and Hesse's sense of the collapse of the norms of the spirit is the troubled chorus of modern European-man-thinking, running the gamut from Kafka's poignantly absurd hunger-artist to Valery's magisterially prophetic assertion in a 1935 essay that

> a disorder to which no end could be imagined was observable on every hand. We find it around us and within us, in our daily habits, in our manners, in the newspapers, in our pleasures, and even in our knowledge. Interruption, incoherence, surprise are the ordinary conditions of our life.[17]

Nihilism and despair, however, are double-edged emotions, for they can be as creative and fructifying as destructive and sterile. The task of the true artist, as Keats knew in the " Ode on Melancholy," is to make his despair a source of productive energy, and to wrest creation from the destructive element in which he has perforce to immerse himself. Thus, paradoxically, it is Hesse's very despair that enables him to make a fundamental break with the epigonal Romantic vein in which he had been mostly content to work as a poet up to the end of World War I. It has been noted how formally innovative his sonata in prose, *Steppenwolf*, is, and how it can stand beside such experimental modernist masterpieces as *The Wasteland*, *Ulysses*, and *The Counterfeiters*. But it has not been acknowledged that *Crisis* in its own way parallels the novel in its departure from the poetic molds that had hitherto been adequate to Hesse. In the case of the poem-cycle as well as that of the prose-fiction, the reader is faced, not with a complete break with the heritage of German Romanticism of which Hesse was probably the major literary exponent, but with a substantive transposition of basically Romantic themes and modes into a modern idiom, setting and mood where Romantic nostalgia gives way to surreal and grotesque evocations of present and future. In *Steppenwolf* and *Crisis*, twentieth-century Romanticism (if there is such a hybrid), rather than imitating the moribund and decadent later nineteenth-century versions that were popular in Hesse's youth and that frequently passed for the original article, affronts the chaotic modern world with a vision that for the first time creates a genuinely contemporary Romantic perspective on that world. Hesse does not merely translate the sensibility of the preceding century with the refurbished props of an updated setting, nor, conversely, does he reject that great tradition from Goethe to Hölderlin with which he feels most at home as a writer, in the way Pound and Eliot tried to turn their backs on the English Romantics. Hesse knew that what you reject too overtly will come back to haunt you in its cruder forms which you will not be able to recognize or control. His procedure is to assimilate and subsequently transform and restructure a literary inheritance to come to terms with the unprecedented demands of an age of accelerating change and confounding discontinuity. How could a serious writer, after the double-shock of psychoanalysis and World War I, do anything else? Drawing upon the past (and not merely by way of cleverly fragmented, parodistic allusions, like the author of *The Wasteland*) to meet the creative demands of the present, Hesse's novel and poem-collection perhaps also funnel into the future, whereas—and by now this is a question to be asked—some of the masterpieces of Anglo-American modernism that try to reject the nineteenth century out of hand may end up as the half-forgotten period pieces in some hypothetical museum of literature.

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[16] Letters of March and August 1926 to Ludwig Finckh and Georg Reinhart, *Materialen*, pp. 70, 95.

[17] " The Outlook for Intelligence," *The Collected Works of Paul Valery*, Vol. 10, trans. Denise Folliot and Jackson Mathews (New York: Bollingen, 1962), 130.

The exacting truth-standards arising out of Hesse's psychoanalytic sounding of the self, then, juggled aside both his self-love and the timidity or artistic inhibition imposed by conventional canons of respectability, and he was able to etch a new kind of self-portrait in *Crisis*, one that by a principle of psychic symmetry or aesthetic complementarity counters the ideal of Hesse as Saint Siddhartha. The artist as saint or sinner: the polarity isn't particularly novel, but Hesse's nihilistic basking in his new-found profligacy in the name of *Aufrichtigkeit* allows him to win for his art a new range of material and expression, thus revitalizing it sufficiently for him to be able to propel himself at the end of the *Steppenwolf* period to the threshold of the *Spätwerk*, the assured mastery of *The Glass Bead Game* with which his career culminates, where confession is dissolved back into a type of cosmic allegory of the evolution of consciousness throughout the different phases of history. But could the fictional biographies of that wondrous meditation, from the Rainmaker to the Magister Ludi, have been possible without the autobiographical experimentation in prose and verse of the twenties? And conversely, isn't the serene spirituality of the final phase in a sense earned and legitimated by Hesse's earlier *Crisis* incarnation? We might go further: whatever forms of spirituality are yet to be developed in the art of our late Western culture, they must surely have come to terms in a substantial way with the grotesque realities engaged in *Crisis*; if not, then they will ring as hollow as the chants of young Hare Krishna followers on a Brooklyn sidewalk.

V

Integrity of spirit won through nihilism and despair—that is the essential achievement of *Crisis*, one forced by the alembic of both laughter and tears. The poem-cycle seeks to front the terrible chaos lurking behind the glittering facades of modern European urban life between the wars; to inoculate the self against its elegant corruption in the process of partaking of its anarchic pleasures and pains with anacreontic gusto. To get some sort of genuine purchase on these submerged patterns of chaos, Hesse makes a bold break with the Romantic convention of the lyric poem as euphonious song, to let jangling dissonances come to the fore. He had adhered rather automatically and unswervingly to the *Lied* tradition from his first volume of poems on, *Romantische Lieder* (1899), but in *Crisis* he largely breaks with his favorite mode to project the disordered perception of a contemporary *poète maudit* who has run amok in a labyrinth of automobiles, call-girls, and jazz bars. This world has a rhythm of its own, one whose fevered, Dionysian pulsations cannot be formally rendered in the *Lied* tradition of latter-day Romanticism, with its languid, liquid and melancholy vocables more suited to a faint-hearted pathetic fallacy than to the frenzied swirl of the street and night-life of a modern city. So Hesse turns to a different set of stylistic strategies to convey the contemporary hurly-burly that he sees in and around him at certain demonic moments in Zürich. Perhaps the most challenging question about the ultimate poetic worth of *Crisis* is, to what extent do Hesse's formal resources adequately engage and capture in language the burden of disordered experience that he bears witness to in these poems? A larger but related issue here is, how far can poetry open its doors to chaos without being blown to smithereens? Can form figure forth the formless, or does chaos in fact possess a form of its own, an inner demon that can be vowelled in the poet's voice, and ordered, Prospero-like? Perhaps the question is false and chimerical, like asking if unicorns can dance on water. But it needs to be asked, nevertheless, at a time when poetry and science are remerging in the half-glimpsed idea that both the inner and the outer world, the psyche and the cosmos, are possibly the crystallized disjecta of a primal and unbounded chaos.

The answer to the question concerning the value of the *Crisis* poems as art is that they are finally only a qualified success, because—to jump the gun on a conclusion which must be supported by further discussion-although Hesse makes a considerable departure from his previous poetic practice, he does not make enough of a clean break because he still cannot relinquish the trappings of a formal stylistic armor in hazarding the forces of chaos. This armor reveals him in a sensational new guise as a modern knight errant willing to break a lance or two against the refractory surfaces of urban life, but the armor is nevertheless too self-protective to provide a genuine opening or clearing for an unprejudiced jousting with chaos. As Faust needs the protection of Mephisto to be able to partake of the infernal festivities on the Brocken on Walpurgisnight, so Hesse turns to a set of traditional rhetorical devices that will serve as a passport to guarantee his safe passage through the quotidian inferno of modern life that is *Crisis*. The poems succeed because of the risks they take, and they fail as well because these risks are always too limited and calculated: Hesse's illuminations are guided so as not to end in a premature terminal silence, like Rimbaud's. Further, Hesse can elude our criticism as well as his own by the nihilistic disclaimer, the poetic vanishing point that literary success and failure, and the question of value, are simply meaningless in the cultural situation out of which he is writing.

It is something of a truism that poets don't so much create forms as they inherit them, and the degree of formal originality they possess manifests itself in their ability to bond or adapt the inherited forms to the exigencies and demands of the context in which they find themselves, which will always be both relatively unique and relatively timeless. Hesse too, in *Crisis*, rejects one aspect of his Romantic legacy, the *Lied* tradition, to explore another and a "lower" mode of the lyric, that of *Galgenhumor* and *Knüttelvers* (gallows humor and doggerel), with which he was familiar from his study of Villon and

Goethe, among others, and which he adapts with wit and bravado to deal with contemporary material. The bawdy persona of these satiric poems represents them as impromptu, improvised trifles, to be taken in not so much as art but as a kind of documentation of momentary moods, impulses, and experiences. At times both mood and mode are not that far removed from Byron's improvisational high-jinks in *Don Juan* ("I write this reeling,/Having got drunk exceedingly today,/So that I seem to stand upon the ceiling"), including the fact that some of Hesse's stanzas too are presented under the guise of having been composed under the influence ("To John the Baptist from Hermann the Schnappsist"). The alcoholic apologetics help the poet to disarm impending critical strictures, to treat material not normally admitted into the temple of serious poetry because of the rules of decorum, and to present a seemingly disordered, tippler's perspective that is in fact as carefully organized and controlled as the doggerel rhyme and meter chosen to convey it.

Thus in *Crisis* Hesse breaks for once with the elevated Romantic lyrical vein in which he had worked as a prolific but largely second-rate poet, to turn with verve and vigor to a satiric mode, that albeit in its constituent formal elements just as traditional as his epigonal Romantic songs, nevertheless represents an abrasive encounter with modernity that makes these poems in truth more serious than his intentionally "serious" poems. Both in style and content they force an opening for disorder and confusion to enter the stage, and to be engaged by Hermann-the-Schnappsist, the satiric self for whom the unfunny issue is that of the survival of self and poetry. Tempered in the crucible of his (heroic) despair, these crisis lyrics are, in the form of gallows humor and doggerel, articulate screams, cacophonous litanies that take to their logical extreme the confessional aesthetics of the *Steppenwolf* period. The sardonic collection may be seen as the *avant garde* of a highly creative, deranged, and suicidal decade in Hesse's life, for it is a calculated slap at the bourgeois friends, readers and critics who wanted to embalm Hesse as a venerable Great Writer, and who characterized his new works as "irresponsible derailments," insisting that the author of *Siddhartha* owed it to himself to maintain a more dignified public posture. As if Hesse could care less. Like the wolf in the short story that closes the *Steppenwolf* phase, Hesse wanted to bite the childish hand that was trying to feed him chocolate through the bars of his cage. He wasn't so much interested in the sweets to be had from his audience as in the survival of his troubled *daimon*, no matter what the cost.

VI

Hesse's self-willed rebellion against respectability and convention in *Crisis* proceeds simultaneously on the sexual, social and literary planes. The revolt of the forty-eight year old poet as *enfant terrible* is enacted under the auspices of Dionysian intoxication, fueled by wine, whisky and cognac, which serve also as the necessary sensual dissolvents of decades of inhibition or repression of libidinous impulses. The active surrender to the realm of the eternal feminine, the career of the flaming senses, is moreover a flight from the idyllic self-isolation of the mountain-retreat at Montagnola—the contemplative seat of the cool *Geist* which with its perpetually regulated rhythms holds the fear of death in abeyance—to the flickering and irregular contortions of urban night life, where Hesse hopes to have one last romp before capitulating to the onset of old age. The erotic crossing from the realm of spirit to that of instinct is ironically a movement from country to town in the concerted effort to recapture there the lost *Natur* of childhood, to recover its wholeness in the fractured angularities of revelling. From the midst of this self-renewal Hesse could write in a lighter moment that

> one does everything in life, or most of it, on account of women. If I struggled the greater part of my life, and thought up systems to defend myself against them, I now do just the opposite. If I strove for wisdom in my younger years, I now take pains to be childish for once. And it succeeds, not always, but often enough, and gives me pleasure.[18]

The Goethe tradition is never far from Hesse's art, for his excursion in organizing a latter-day innocence is in a sense akin to Faust's rejuvenation in the Witch's Kitchen scene, where he is privileged with a burning vision of female pulchritude and drinks off a flaming potion that will make him a lady killer. So too Hesse's entry into the world of the senses in *Crisis* is replete with animal icons and beast images (dog, wolf, pig), as well as the associated Faustian violation of innocence, as Hesse (in a blasphemous poem ultimately not included in the volume, " The Man of Fifty Years ") imagines himself stripping down a young girl "instead of reading a tome by Goethe" at least one time before—"in God's name"—the arrival of death.[19] Faust's Walpurgisnight adventure is also replicated in the shorthand of fragmentary references to the revels of a masked ball (one which Hesse actually attended, and which is expanded in *Steppenwolf* into the surreal, hallucinatory Magic Theater sequence). But in *Crisis* there is no epiphanic uplift by way of Pablo-Mozart and the golden track of the Immortals; what remains is the galling frustration of the fallow dawn, when the hung-over partier can only curse Lola, the flirtatious wife who fanned his lust all night long only to disappear at party's end into her husband's marriage-hearse, a "Fiat car," with the parting shot, "go to the devil" ("Morning After the Masked Ball," p. 99).

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[18] "Verbummelter Tag," in *Materialen*, p. 71.

And so Hesse's pocket Brocken-bestiary in the style of the roaring twenties—jazz, booze, the foxtrot and the onestep—ends in a failure reflected back to him in the sordid mirror of self-hatred the morning after. The repeated, linked invocations of the myths of the Prodigal Son and of Don Juan, noted by Mark Boulby,[20] finally fail to fulfill the poet in a childhood paradise dream of sensual gratification, an achieved epithalamion of the innocent senses fully consummated. The attempted *Bildungs*-program of a self-abandon in eros culminates in nausea and a feeling of the ridiculous, grotesque nature of the attempt. The result is a type of catharsis not envisioned at the outset, for the lust to cram the empty self and to incorporate the female ends in a purgatorial voiding of that self. The dedicatory surrender or *Hingabe* to the "dark one, primal mother of all desire" undergoes an ironic inversion in the closing poem's sarcastic farewell to female arms, and the numb dread of the unavoidable end betokens the return of *Geist*, whose resources will have to make that stark thought supportable:

The End

The flame that lured me through the pain
Of frantic pleasure has flickered and gone out.
My rigid fingers scream with gout,
And suddenly I'm in the wilderness again.
Recoiling from the shards of luckless revels,
Glutted, exhausted, disappointed, I,

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[19] *Materialen*, pp. 197-198.

[20] *Hermann Hesse: His Mind and Art* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1967), p. 169.

Steppenwolf, have packed my bag. I'm going
Back to my native steppe to die.
Goodbye to sparkling, smiling masquerades,
Ladies too lovely, too ingratiating.
Behind the suddenly fallen curtain,
I know the old familiar dread is waiting.
Slowly I go to greet the enemy.
Harried by anguish, with laborious breath
And pounding, apprehensive heart,
I wait, wait, wait for death.

Am Ende

Plötzlich ist verzuckt das Flackerlicht,
Das mich lockte durch so viele Lüste,
In den starren Fingern schreit die Gicht,
Plözlich steh ich wieder in der Wüste,
Steppenwolf, und speie auf die Scherben
Der verglühten Feste ohne Glück,
Packe meinen Koffer, fahr zurück
In die Steppe, denn es gilt zu sterben.
Lebe wohl, vergnügte Bilderwelt,
Maskenballe, allzu süsse Frauen;
Hinterm Vorhang, der nun klirrend fällt,
Weiss ich warten das gewohnte Grauen.
Langsam geh dem Feinde ich entgegen,
Eng und enger schnürt mich ein die Not.
Das erschrockne Herz mit harten Schlägen
Wartet, wartet, wartet auf den Tod.

The foundering at the finish of the erotic dream is, however, not an unwelcome result, but a necessary defeat that Hesse pursued with clear-eyed passion. From start to finish, the poem's " desperate and vain effort to drown the corrosive, cauterizing intellect in sensuous experience " [21] was a willed, ironically belated but coherent struggle to live out his long-pent-up sexual impulses in an all-encompassing symbolic incarnation of Hermann Hesse the Profligate. What we have in *Crisis* is not so much wish-fulfillment as a type of creative self-healing, a restoration of psychic equilibrium brought about by the purging of a hypertrophied intellect through modern Don-Juanism, the necessary context of which is the *Aufhebung* of that incarnation once its task is done and the spirit can re-emerge sublimed and freed for new tasks.

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[21] Boulby, *Hermann Hesse*, p. 167.

The failure is thus fated, one which can no longer be put off or elided. Hesse's *amor fati* makes it the occasion of a strenuous self-creation, which allows him to go on and complete the novel, *Steppenwolf*, and to proceed to a different self-fictionalizing altogether in the serene *Spätwerk*, beginning in *Journey to the East* (1932). To rekindle his creative energies at the conflagration of a short-term failure in willful dissipation is the most intriguing strategy of *Crisis* that should be viewed as one more facet of Hesse's lynx-like and roguish personality. Thus it should not surprise us that in a prose fragment written four years before *Crisis*, he already foresaw in foreshortened form the whole Don Juan cycle to come, only to dismiss contemptuously this "current incarnation": "Put an end to yourself, mannikin, you belong to the old iron." [22] Nor should it amaze us, finally, that at the beginning of the next decade, Hesse turns his back on the acute confessional aesthetics that had served as the seedbed of his creative drives during the problematic *Steppenwolf* years, and begins to speak with Castalian calm of the poetic ideal of impersonality, of "the disparition of all that is personal and accidental in the secret of form" [23]—a fitting epitaph to the powerful, troubling self-imago which by the 1930's was no longer current, but already moribund in Hesse's imagination.

VII

If there is a genuine failure in *Crisis*, it is to be found, as signalled earlier, in Hesse's inability or refusal to go far enough in engaging the disintegrative forces governing our mass culture. Although his poetry comes closer here than anywhere else to the real language of men—an early reviewer stressed how he "forges from everyday speech, the monologue and the letter a flexible, life-like idiom of much grace"[24]—his entry into the destructive element is too calculated, stylized and formally defensive, what with its easy and witty elegance; its ready reliance on rhyme, meter, formulaic colloquial blasphemy and cursing. The quasi Mephistophelean cleverness and bawdy negations ultimately mately prevent *Crisis* from being the major poetry it might have become, given a less programmed, more open-ended confrontation with chaos.

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[22] "From the Journal of One Who Has Been Derailed" (1922), *Materialen*, pp. 199-203.

[23] "Mozart's Operas" (1932), *Materialen*, pp. 136-137.

[24] Hans Böhm, *Der Kunstwart*, 44 (1930-31), 803-805, my translation.

Even *Hesse's* chosen goal of erotic dissipation is rendered with rather conventional shock-tactics; lust is still too traditionally poetic, and there is little actual body language or erotic imagery beyond the obligatory breast, belly, hair and eyes. Hesse's *rendezvous* with sex is too willed and intellectual, and he stops where a contemporary of his like D. H. Lawrence will really get started. So also his stance *pour épater les bourgeois* is limited because his revolt against the middle-class assumes a middle-class framework to validate it, and reveals Hesse's dilemma to be that of the hypochondriac guest at the spa, who fulminates against bourgeois complacency safely ensconced in a luxury hotel, or of Harry Haller, who launches his attacks on Philistinism under the araucaria, the ruling icon of the bourgeois temple in which he dwells while living off his stocks and bonds. Similarly, the dramatic persona of *Crisis*, Hesse's alter ego, is no social outcast challenging the corrupt prerogatives of a privileged class; he is on the contrary a man of means, entering the playground of eros with the aid of smart clothes, liquor, and dance steps, and even the gay doings of the masked ball are only a *Fasching*-equivalent of genuine Bacchic ecstacy. In a sense the profligate here is only the other side of middle-class conformity, so that Hesse finds himself caught up in an unfruitful dialectic of respectability/debauchery that in the frame posited by the poems permits no synthesis or higher resolution. One of the deeper ironies of *Crisis* is that the demonic embodiment of worldly complacency, the Catholic baker with his expensive automobile that the poet would like to be run over by, could by a *volte-face* become the double or twin of the poet, or of the Harry Haller who engages in an absurd hunt after automobiles in the Magic Theater.

Consequently the sardonic humor—the laughter of despair—betokens the irresolvable bind the author finds himself in, which he is able to rise above only when he turns to the writing of the second half of *Steppenwolf*, where the warfare of the two selves (Faust's "zwei Seelen")' opens into a vision of the infinite plurality of selves in a cosmic expansion of individuality that fans out to include the Immortals. There Hesse achieves a larger synthesis that assimilates but transcends the saint/sinner, blessing/cursing split in the surreal transformations of the Magic Theater. Whereas the laughter in *Crisis* is destructive of both the self and the other, in the last third of *Steppenwolf* it is corrosive only to move toward a greater construction. If in the poems Hesse doesn't get far beyond the problematics of the child (the

Prodigal Son, Don Juan), in the novel the child is reborn and integrated with old-age wisdom, which is joyful and gay, culminating in the laughter of the Immortals—indifferent in the best sense, but not nihilistic.

So Hesse, in *Crisis*, fails to go far enough in terms of either content or form. He does not hazard enough; he opens the door to chaos only a crack, to play, armed to the teeth, with a few disconcerting embodiments of the living dark, before the door is forced shut again with a verse-*Knüttel*. How easy it is to pass such a judgment in the secure warmth of one's study; how convenient to ponder chaos, keeping it at arm's length with pen, paper, typewriter, whatnot. Does any poet ever go far enough? Harry Haller's resolve was to have an accident with his razor on his fiftieth birthday: perhaps that is going too far, and not disorderly enough. Maybe too the failure the reader sees in the author is really his own as his critical specter is reflected back to him in a reductive ratio. But perhaps it is more important to raise questions than to find answers, those paltry birds that drop stillborn from the branches of one's best thoughts. And on that note I round back to my question at the outset: what is possible for poetry today? Or to recast it somewhat, is it possible for a poetry of crisis to find an authentic voice for chaos, a language that syllables the cosmic dark, that sounds into the black holes of space without being sucked in, that renders the configurations of disharmony? And does chaos possess an inner form that may be captured in a language that will not be mere gibberish, a mad cipher or inane howl? Is such a poetry possible, or is the very idea of it a terminal delusion? The reader can only raise the question; it is for the true poets to conjure the devil of chaos in utterance, bind him in speech, deliver his form, whatever that might turn out to be.

In the closing decades of our millenial century, it may be the only thing worth trying in poetry, even if only failure attends the poet's speaking-out-of the critical disarray of our multiverse. In this venture, the Hesse of *Crisis* may serve as a kind of Elder Brother, who in the twenties clearly heard the crack of doom, and tried to record some of its sound waves in an astonishing verse diary.

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Book Reviews

Names on Trees: *Ariosto into Art* by Rensselaer W. Lee. Princeton Essays on the Arts, 3. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977. Pp. xiv + 124. $14.50 cloth, $5.95 paper.

Rensselaer W. Lee, whose *Ut Pictura Poesis* (1940) has long provided the standard introduction to the Renaissance theory of the mimetic relationship between poetry and painting, now puts us further in his debt with this succinct, lively study of a particular instance of that relationship: the many images depicting Ariosto's episode of Angelica and Medoro carving their linked names all over the pastoral landscape in which their love has burgeoned (*Orlando Furioso* xix). In *Names on Trees*, Lee examines pictorial examples of this subject spanning several hundred years of European (and American) art, and one can but applaud the ease with which he carries his great learning and the graceful prose in which he clothes it. Still, gratitude must be alloyed with regret: at the brevity of the study, which, excluding notes, comprises but 84 pages, many given over wholly or in part to illustrations; at the fragmentation of discourse, and consequent loss of cumulative argumentative force, that results from the division of the spare text into nine chapters; and, above all, at lost opportunities to explore some of the critical issues raised by the many and varied visual responses to the challenge of Ariosto's amorous episode.

As Lee says in his preface, the "main concern" of *Names on Trees* is "the interpretation by the painters of [the] human, original, and influential pastoral" of Angelica and Medoro, or, more precisely, of its focal moment when the lovers put knife to bark in public testimony of their shared passion. In the first two chapters, Lee locates the episode at the confluence of two cultural streams. Chapter One, "Liber Naturae," sketches the topos of Nature as a book, starting with the medieval conception that all creatures, as well as Nature as a whole, are books in which we can learn about the Creator. Pivoting on Shakespeare's *As You Like It*—a play embodying the "Renaissance discovery of the world" and "the fresh, original, and observant poetry of a new age" (p. 5)—Lee arrives at his particular subject by means of Orlando (the name ironically recalling Ariosto's maddened hero?), who wishes to inscribe Rosalind's name on every tree. Here "the Book of Nature becomes as well a series of blank leaves... not only symbolically but almost literally a book on whose pages a lover can record the amatory infusions of his heart and the name of his girl" (p. 6). Angelica and Medoro, when they begin carving, will likewise trivialize the venerable topos with their "grace note in the long history of the medieval metaphor, nature a book" (pp. 6-7). Lee's history-of-ideas approach should be supplemented by noting that the act of carving names on trees would be especially significant to Renaissance painters, conscious as they were of the rivalry between verbal and visual art: tree-writing appropriated to the poet's realm of language that natural landscape which was the painter's special preserve. Such poetic aggression could best be met and overcome by in turn appropriating the arboreal compositions of Angelica and Medoro as a subject for visual representation. Thus paintings of the Ariostan subject can be seen as exemplars (or heirs) of a noble tradition of *paragone*.

Chapter Two surveys classical antecedents of Ariosto's tree-writing episode: not only Ovid's fifth *Heroides* (Oenone to Paris), the Ferrarese master's clearest inspiration, but also Virgil, Propertius, and others. These pastoral incidents, ignored by medieval poets, reappear in lyrics of Boiardo, and in Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, before finding an especially congenial setting of "new freshness and color" (p. 11) in the *Furioso*. Chapter Three brings us to Ariosto's poem, specifically to an all-too-brief survey of some visual depictions of Angelica's adventures before she and Medoro begin inscribing their names on trees and rocks. With Chapter Four, "Locus Amoenus," we enter the heart of Lee's study: the pastoral, tree-carving interlude in Canto xix.

Lee's reading of the episode stresses its pastoral simplicity and Ariosto's transformation of a moment that is elegiac for Ovid and other classical poets into one that celebrates "intense, unalloyed, present happiness" (p. 30). He reiterates this interpretation on p. 38 ("the felicity of love in idleness enjoyed by Ariosto's lovers"), p. 71 ("Ariosto's warm and candid idyll"), and elsewhere, and it controls his judgments on all the depictions of the scene that he discusses. Unfortunately, such a reading ignores the undercutting humor of the lovers' obsessive inscription of every possible tree, sufficiently soft stone, and interior wall, and misses as well the irony of how all this idyllic literary self-expression will shortly wreak havoc on Orlando's sanity. Nor does Lee comment on the scene's paradigmatic exposition of the theme of love inspiring artistic creation, although it functions as a parody before the fact of Sidney's injunction to himself in *Astrophel and Stella*, "look in your heart and write." Perhaps most debatable in Lee's aproach to his subject is his inconsistent treatment of Ariosto and the painters in respect of their freedom to interpret their sources innovatively. Ariosto's adaptation of Ovid's Oenone shows his "brilliant gift of pouring very old wine into very attractive new bottles" (p. 30), but visual artists are to be judged by the fidelity with which they reproduce what Lee takes to be the univocal mood and meaning of the *Furioso* passage. Thus, for example, "a particular artistic style may be hospitable or inhospitable to the quality of Ariosto's poetry. When the pictorial vehicle is the contrived ingenuity and cool abstractness of the Mannerist style of the middle and late sixteenth century, the picture itself may be ingenious or interesting, but the uncomplicated freshness and charm of Ariosto's narrative may fare badly" (pp. 34-35).

For Lee, the doctrine of *ut pictura poesis* requires the painter to copy the poetic subject faithfully, in tone as well as content, or risk censure for following "canons of style" which "throw up artificial barriers between [in this case] the simplicity of the poet's pristine narrative and its *true interpretation* by the sister art of painting" (p. 38; emphasis mine). Recent work by David Rosand, Svetlana Alpers, and others suggests that we should analyze carefully, and value, the reinterpretation of classical myths by humanist painters in their adaptations of Ovid, Philostratus, *et alia*; surely visual rethinkings of Ariosto's "modern" mythological subject deserve similar respect for their originality, rather than denigration for departing from a "true interpretation."

Consistent with his prescriptive approach, Lee prefers "the greater closeness to reality that marks the spiritual climate and artistic expression of the seventeenth century" (p. 41) over the Mannerist paintings and engravings he discusses in Chapter Four, and so in Chapter Five, "Baroque," we learn that "it was inevitable that the pictorial interpretation of Ariosto would thrive on this change" of aesthetic (p. 43). Lee singles out artists of the Venetian school—Guercino, Liberi, Blanchard—for particular praise. Chapter Six catalogues Rococo treatments less to Lee's liking, including a revival of Michelangelo-inspired motifs and figures that he finds "mere *forza d'arte*, lacking verisimilitude, and dramatically vacant" (p. 60). Could one not also read the combination of Michelangelo's heroic-Christian forms and Ariosto's pastoral-erotic motifs as an act of artistic synthesis parallel in intent (whatever its success) to Ariosto's own combination of Ovidian and chivalric narrative materials?

Among eighteenth-century artists, the Venetians Sebastiano Ricci and Giambattista Tiepolo earn praise; in their work, "poetry changes into painting by an unforced and natural process" (p. 64). Chapter Seven, "Pastoral Twilight," records the petering out of the tradition of Angelica-Medoro paintings in the nineteenth century, while Chapter Eight, "Variations on a Theme," inspects some initial-carving images perhaps inspired by Ariosto's lovers, but not directly in the Angelica-Medoro, Oenone-Paris traditions. Chapter Nine, "Reprise and Epilogue," offers final examples of the "old convention" of carving names on trees "put to new, imaginative uses" (p. 84)—an indication that such innovation is lauable in later art, not too closely dependent on Ariosto.

Learned and entertaining as Professor Lee's enterprise is, its interpretive focus remains narrow. His chosen episode in Ariosto offers painters more points of departure than he allows it. One of its aims is the serio-comic presentation of an art that dominates (and, by its thousands of carved signatures, disfigures) nature through the force of love. Such a self-conscious reference to the artist's imposition of his/her powers on the external world may well have inspired, and may justify, the Mannerist responses Lee decries in sixteenth-century depictions of the episode. If, as I have suggested, the Angelica-Medoro tree-carving moment also embodies (and teases) the theme of love inspiring art, then the slung leg motif which, as Lee notes with disapproval, appears so frequently in paintings on this subject has been inserted by the painter to reinforce the link between sexual and artistic energies, not simply as a Mannerist excrescence.

One further aspect, at least, of the tradition of Angelica-Medoro paintings would have profited from Professor Lee's attention, given his special qualifications to explicate the *ut pictura poesis* topos. In many of the images he cites, the painter shows Medoro carving, or pointing to what he has carved, while Angelica watches attentively. (This distribution of roles, incidentally, constitutes an interesting instance of sexism, for in *Orlando Furioso* xix.34-36 the subject of the verbs of writing and carving is Angelica, not Medoro.) Nothing in Ariosto's text sanctions this moment, which in fact depicts an artist demonstrating or explaining his work to his rapt audience, and thus calls our attention to the role played by the painter as interpreter, rather than simply illustrator, of another (verbal) artist's work. In the version of *Angelica and Medoro* by Michele Rocca in the Galleria Communale, Prado—not reproduced by Lee, who cites instead the Rocca in the Walters Gallery, Baltimore (fig. 43)—this self-conscious interest in interpretation is underscored by two putti in the lower right corner of the painting who look at an earlier instance of the artist-lover's handiwork, the names carved in a large rock. One points out the names to the other in a gesture that parodies and reinforces the didactic component of the main figure group, in which both lovers gaze upward, as if spellbound, at the tree above them in the trunk of which Medoro is again incising their names.

Despite its unwillingness to consider analytically some of the creative uses to which humanist painters put Ariosto's poetic subject in their images, Lee's book remains handsome, useful, delightful to read, and carefully prepared. (I have found only two errors: footnote 61 puts the operative Angelica-Medoro octave in canto ix of the *Furioso* instead of canto xix, and in footnote 118 Vincenzo de Rossi's *Theseus and Helen* should be *Paris and Helen.*) Only a clear sense of the importance of the subject—a sense we owe in good part to his labors over the last four decades and more—leads me to wish he had cut into it more deeply.

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The Growth of a Personal Voice: *Piers Plowman and The Faerie Queene* by Judith H. Anderson. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976. Pp. 240. $15.00.

A particular interest attaches to the "I" of medieval and Renaissance poems, perhaps because we are tantalized by the relationship of the older poets to their narrators. It takes a great effort of the historical imagination to begin to deduce what the first person signified at a time when self-expression was subordinate to specific rhetorical goals. Judith Anderson has taken on the formidable task of looking for the poet himself in two works which by their very nature are committed to a representation of the truth in terms that are universal. She finds, however, that in both *Piers Plowman* and *The Faerie Queene*, the poet's role evolved with the writing of his poem until finally something like a personal voice is heard; in other words, narrator and poet tend ultimately to merge. At the same time, allegory in its impersonal, objective aspects is left behind as the poet comes face to face with himself and with his God.

When A. C. Hamilton published in 1961 his important essay on the relationship between *Piers Plowman* and *The Faerie Queene*, he made the point that these poems have in common not only certain moral concerns but also the theme of the quest. In Professor Anderson's book, the quest is treated as actually a search for the poet's own self; his self-awareness becomes the all-important value, to be achieved if necessary at the expense of his allegory. Yet the reader of *The Growth of a Personal Voice* may be tempted to ask: what supreme value should be associated with the poet's own intervention into his poem? What teleology decrees that the allegorical poem should culminate either in self-expression or in self-discovery? Unquestioned assumptions may leave this book open to criticism that it neglects genre and style as determinants of meaning. Perhaps only by placing the consideration of the "I" of each of these poems within its specific artistic context can we possibly see what the poet intended. But something of a bias against artificial ordering in poetry appears to prevent Professor Anderson from taking this approach. Instead, she looks for echoes and parallels within the poems as her primary clue to significance, finding in these a self-conscious expression of the poet and a concern with the creative process itself.

In taking for granted that great poetry implies a freedom from pre-determined structure, she inevitably finds the later books of *The Faerie Queene* richer than the earlier. Cautiously sidestepping the question of the order in which Spenser composed the books of *The Faerie Queene*, she traces an evolutionary pattern from beginning to end, going beyond even Harry Berger's formulation to include the Mutability Cantos. And since the poet himself is submerged for the most part in his narrator, she has to rely largely upon presentation of character in order to show that as the personages of the poem become more conscious of themselves, so the poet "expresses a new self-awareness." Finally, just as Langland's Dreamer comes closer and closer to his own identity through the increasing "inwardness" of the characters whom he meets, so at last Spenser meets himself in the person of Colin Clout, who brings to full circle the "I" of the first stanza: "Lo! I the man, whose Muse whylome did maske,/As time her taught, in lowly shephards weeds...."

It is an attractive argument in that it makes sense of the movement away from schematic allegory after the first two books—books which Professor Anderson views as limited by Spenser's very assurance about what form they should take. We are told that the poet's position in the first books "is a source of profound strength but also of weakness" because they embody "preconceived answers." A romantic attitude surely, but to say that the natural mind is the untidy mind does beg the question. If the later books of *The Faerie Queene* are less tidy than the earlier, does this necessarily make them more valuable? We are told that if we possessed only the first two books of Spenser's poem, Langland's "might well appear the more basically searching poem, more genuinely about life than about systems." The word "life" chimes with Professor Anderson's fondness for organic metaphors such as "growth." Given this taste for the natural over the artificial, it is little wonder that she finds a kind of Darwinian progression from an Elizabethan sense of order to a more modern free form.

Yet paradoxically, as she notes, the first two books of *The Faerie Queene*, which are farthest from Langland in structure, are in fact closest in thought. No doubt Spenser was restating the morality of his literary ancestors in a form which would meet Renaissance standards of beauty. But if in the later books of *The Faerie Queene* he deviated from those standards, there is more than one possible explanation: he need not have deviated for the sake of greater freedom or self-expression but—to repeat an old-fashioned argument—simply because he could not find a myth as adequate to the virtues of chastity, friendship, justice, and courtesy as he found for holiness and temperance. In other words, the problem might be rephrased as one of invention.

For a more realistic appraisal of Spenser's evolving self-awareness, one would have to take into account his need for myth, as well as his need for beauty. Both separate him radically from Langland, whose apocalyptic approach to the moral problems of human existence obviates the need for self-contained illusionistic fiction. Whereas the earlier poet presents a narrator who has to be enlightened through a series of visions, the later poet presents a narrator who already has the answers and who therefore shapes his story for his reader's benefit. It would be interesting to have a fuller discussion of just how Spenser transforms what he may have borrowed from Langland. If, for example, his Piers of the October Eclogue derives at all from Langland, it is significant that this Piers praises beauty as that "immortall mirrhor." The changes made by Spenser in his medieval sources are at least as worth considering as his dependence upon them. And of course aesthetic divergences between the two poets also imply moral ones.

In short, the difference of genre needs to be confronted more directly. This, however, is almost entirely precluded by the plan of this book. It proceeds so much by commentary, book by book of *The Faerie Queene* and passus by passus of *Piers Plowman*, that these parallel lines seem destined never to quite meet. In considering the question of whether these poems aspire to the condition of autobiography, it has to be recognized that they belong to that allegorical tradition in which the poet is the servant of a higher truth. Perhaps indeed the inspired poet may at last be allowed to speak in his own voice. The power of such an "I" is undeniable, for nothing but the poet's own authority can finally attest to the truth of his vision. But it is possible that this personal voice is the outcome of a genuine allegorical vision, as well as the most rhetorically effective way of presenting that vision. The theological argument in favor of "personality" seems to me a little out of place here, especially when it begins to sound suspiciously like the modern secular emphasis on the importance of self.

JUDITH DUNDAS

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The Harmonies of "The Merchant of Venice" by Lawrence Danson. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978. Pp. ix + 195. $15.00.

This book presents a Christian reading of *The Merchant of Venice*. Without extending claims for a Christian reading of all Shakespeare, Danson believes that "in Shakespeare's defiantly 'impure' art, a parable may be complicated without being confused" (p. 70), and so Portia's treatment of Shylock is justified through what she teaches the audience: "In making sin appear *as* sin, God's law performs the crucial didactic function that Portia will make Venice's law perform, making man aware of his inevitably sinful nature (since no man can perform all the works of law), and hence of his dependence upon God for salvation" (p. 77). Danson answers interpretations which may either be critical of the Christians or sympathetic to Shylock (no other choices are presented) by arguing from biblical allusion, the use of historical or literary context, or close reading. The interpretation is particularly critical of Shylock who is seen as leaping from brotherhood to barbarity in the "Hath not a Jew eyes" speech. When analyzing Shylock's behavior Danson neglects to mention Jessica's elopement as immediate motivation for Shylock's revenge, even though pages are devoted to Shylock's reaction to news of Leah's ring. His slightest lapse is held up to scrutiny while the Christians are defended *en masse*: "the outraged feeling that the poor man is intolerably wronged ... has led to the creation of a tribe of of heartless fops where one had expected the cast of a romantic comedy which celebrates harmony and love, human aind divine" (p. 133).

The argument does not convince for several reasons. Its unevenness is demonstrated by the paragraph above: some important issues, actions, characters are virtually neglected while others are magnified out of proportion. The harmony it purports to demonstrate is assumed and therefore any element—Antonio's possible homosexuality or the cruelty of Gratiano—that threatens the harmony is rejected. Harmony is taken to mean: 1) the reconciliation of all issues raised; 2) the basic goodness of Christian characters; 3) the positive tone of a romantic comedy. Above all, the harmony of *The Merchant of Venice* will not admit, in Danson's reading, any irony. He says of Shylock's forced conversion: "On faith, as it were, let us here assume that Shakespeare intends no corruscating [sic] irony, but rather a demonstration of Antonio's increased harmonization, the amending in one gesture both of his own and, perforce, Shylock's spiritual state, in his response to Portia's question" (pp. 124-5). Such a leap of faith may be too great for many readers who, like this one, find perennial fascination in the complex interplay of irony with romance, moral and religious values with a vividly realized social fabric. In fact, the kind of harmony Danson calls for does not even admit the subtle even-handedness of the portraits of Christian and Jew, each with a claim of sympathy and each with human defect.

The book is intended for "the non-specialist student," and yet its decisions of emphases and explanation seem governed by the interests of specialists. Even so, one wonders what students these days will be satisfied to dismiss issues like Antonio's melancholy or Portia's hinting the choice of casket in "Tell me where is Fancy bred" simply because the questions raise more problems than they settle or they conflict with the play's harmony. One cannot fault Professor Danson for wishing to contribute to the continuing debate about one of Shakesptare's most intriguing plays, but his book is not informative enough for his intended audience and his contribution to the debate too special for a book-length study. We would have been better served by an article summarizing his argument addressed to his fellow Shakespeareans.

Wayne State University MARILYN WILLIAMSON

Virginia Woolf: *Sources of Madness and Art* by Jean O. Love. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: Univ. of California Press, 1977. Pp. xiv + 379. $14.95.

The psychological approach to literature is potentially fruitful, especially as it illuminates the creative process. Jean Love, in what is "the first of a two-part study of the more personal side of the artist's life," applies her expertise as a psychologist to certain issues in the life of Virginia Woolf which, in spite of the Quentin Bell biography, remain perplexing: Woolf's "so-called madness, her physical health difficulties, her atypical sexuality, and her preoccupation with death.... her characteristic patterns of thought and her obsessive need to write and to create... [and] the relationship between her madness and her art." Love depends heavily on the Bell biography, but she has drawn her theories and some of her applications of them from other literary, historical, and psychological studies. For her evidence, however, she prefers to rely on "personal documents," primarily memoirs, letters, and diaries. For the most part, she recognizes the complexities inherent in the use of such documents, mainly Woolf's tendencies to subject facts to various artistic transformations and to view persons and events in a fantastic or humorous light. Consequently, Love tries to check Woolf's representations against other sources and accounts, some of which, in turn, are not objective. Love also examines sources, like the letters from Leslie to Julia Stephen, to which Bell did not have access. She thus adds to our knowledge of the personalities of Woolf's father and mother the relationship between them, and the impact they had, separately and together, on their daughter. Love traces the contradictions in Leslie Stephen's personality to his own family background, to the relationship between his parents and to his relationship with them. Similarly, she accounts for Julia Stephen's personality by exploring her family background.

Love includes Woolf's novels among the "personal documents" from which she draws her evidence. That she should do so is not surprising since she has already published a book on them: *Worlds in Consciousness*: *Mythopoetic Thought in the Novels of Virginia Woolf* (1970). In this book, Love outlined the principles of developmental cognitive psychology, then applied them to Woolf's novels where she found a lack of differentiation and an absence of hierarchies among the parts of wholes, multiple meanings, as well as magic, animism, religion, and sorcery. The discussions of various novels in these terms are provocative, but occasionally one-sided. For example, Mrs. Ramsay's positive, unifying magic is only one aspect of Woolf's portrait of her, something Love recognizes in the more recent study. In this study, too, the procedure is more empirical. Love outlines the biographical evidence of which the novels are a carefully defined part, then introduces psychological theories when they are relevant and illuminating. Novels like *To the Lighthouse*, Love says, "cannot be treated as fact" but can be used to clarify information compiled from other sources." She is more willing to use the novels when they support the other evidence, however, than when they do not. When she wishes, for example. to establish Leslie Stephen as the "old wretch" who exhausted Julia completely, she acknowledges the security and sustenance Mrs. Ramsay derives from the "'admirable fabric of masculine intelligence,'" but she adds that "these statements pertain to a fictional character. The real woman, Virginia's mother, whatever her inclinations, was allowed to do very little leaning on her husband." Love is less ready, in other parts of her discussion, to remind us of the fictional nature of certain statements. The Stephen children, she says, "were forbidden to hope for anything unless firm evidence existed that they would get it, as Virginia indicated in *To the Lighthouse*." True, evidence from letters corroborates Leslie's preoccupation with facts. Still the question remains: To what degree is any detail in Woolf's fiction autobiographical? Love is wise to draw on the novels in only a supplemental way.

It is difficult to read the study and not see Leslie Stephen as the villain. In spite of Love's attempt in "The Ragamice" section to bring out his more positive traits and contributions to his children's lives, like his drawing and hiking, he remains a negative figure. Explanations of the causes of his destructive behavior do not mitigate the portrait of him as a confused and unhappy bundle of insecurities imperiously demanding continual affection and reassurance without ever being satisfied either with himself or with the love of others. Sections of Love's discussion of him are entitled, for example, "The Divided Man," "Getting What One Wants Without Asking," "Sulking Through Inevitabilities," and "Leslie at His Games." When we encounter a section entilted "Leslie the Protector," the tone is ironic.

The effects of the background Leslie and Julia Stephen created for their children, especially for Virginia Woolf, is Love's primary concern. Physical and mental illness and death were overwhelming presences in the family into which Woolf was born and in which she lived. Her fears for her own health and sanity as well as her preoccupation with the absurd frailty of human life preyed upon by chaotic and uncontrollable forces derives from this background and accounts for much of her instability. Among the other circumstances which affected Woolf were a lack of intimacy with her mother, a relationship between her parents in which the wife sacrificed to the often unreasonable demands of a husband who had temper tantrums, and the apparent sexual advances of one or both of her half-brothers. The results were Virginia's searches for substitute mothers and her demands for love and demonstrations of affection as well as fits of temper that paralleled her father's, her distrust of traditional marriages, and her attraction to women. Woolf's sexuality, Love decides, cannot be summed up in conventional terms. The best description of her is androgynous.

Against this background, Love attempts to define the relationship between the tendencies which led to madness and the tendencies which resulted in Woolf's art. Careful not to make any facile equation between madness and art, Love claims that, in Woolf's case, the two "emerged from a common ground, and although they were complexly inter-related, neither gave rise to the other." The scenes Woolf was able to create so vividly could, on the one hand, result in hallucinations or, on the other, vivid writing; the ability could be either uncontrolled or controlled. The merging of inner and outer states could result, on the one hand, in a loss of touch with reality or, on the other, in what literary critics have come to call the pathetic fallacy. Writing became Woolf's method of creating order and sanity in the face of chaos and madness as well as an activity that gave her identity in the face of a weak sense of herself.

A pattern in Love's book is to raise questions about what has been said about Woolf's life and then, either to return to the accepted notions or to declare the matter inconclusive. Her treatment of the alleged sexual advances of George Duckworth is a case in point as is her consideration of the date of Woolf's first breakdown. Another pattern is to propose how things might have been if certain factors had not been present, then to shatter the illusion of free will with the determinism that pervades the book: "Given the personalities of her parents, they could not conduct themselves very differently than they did, and so the pathetic drama resulting in Julia's early death had to work itself out. And since Leslie was as he was, there was little likelihood that the mourning for Julia could have gone other than it did. After that, Virginia's personal disturbance was as irresistable as a force of nature." Love's book, which traces the lives of Virginia Woolf and her family through the years when she is writing her first novel, concludes with the observation that, in her life and her art, she "was never to escape her childhood completely." What these patterns in Love's discussion suggest is the complexity of the matter, the difficulty of describing discursively that which contains so many interrelated variables, shifting nuances, and seeming contradictions. In spite of a certain amount of repetition and ambiguity, Love, in the face of such difficulties, does a creditable job. Her book is a substantial response to the increasing wealth of biographical data about Virginia Woolf currently in print.

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Augustus Caesar in "Augustan" England: The Decline of a Classical Norm by Howard D. Weinbrot. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978. Pp. xi + 270. $15.00.

Eighteenth-century studies suffer from a chronic problem of nomenclature, and Howard Weinbrot's new book is likely to induce a crisis in that regard. "Augustan" as the defining or even modifying adjective for the recalcitrant period that stretches intimidatingly from 1660 to 1800 (or it is 1798? or 1789? or 1815? or the death of Jane Austen?) will probably have to join such companions in inadequacy as the unlamented "pre-Romantic" and the more missed "neo-classical" (I still like it). One grows positively nostalgic for simplistic days, when we all knew that whatever the period was called, it was all just poetry of statement anyhow.

Augustus Caesar in "Augustan" England takes in a good deal of important territory, and it does so very well. Professor Weinbrot wisely revised his plans for a very broad study of the rejection of classical standards in this period to focus more acutely on the central figure of Augustus and his major satellites; he has produced a throughly researched and lucidly argued case for Augustus as a negative norm—if any kind of norm at all—for the period we have named after him. Beginning with the classical historians and continuing through a wide selection of English and Continental "Augustan" documents, he has exposed a widespread political animus against Augustus as tyrant and usurper, destroyer of Roman liberties, hypocrite, murderer (of Cicero if no one else—thereby perhaps explaining the continuing regard for Augustus on the part of beginning students of Latin). This Augustus possesses a private life commensurate with his public: adulterer, debauché, etc. In England, this vision of Augustus seems to have been shared by both the Opposition and the Government, as Weinbrot amply demonstrates. Perhaps more surprising to scholars of literature, however, is Weinbrot's revelation of an Augustus who is not the great patron of letters but their corruptor, an unscrupulous politician who in effect "bought" Horace and Virgil, killed Cicero—the last voice of the Republic, exiled Ovid, and rewrote history to his own liking. That fact shuffles a new card into the deck, one that is going to necessitate some serious rethinking about a good many aspects of late Seventeenth- and early Eighteenth-century literature as well as of a good number of individual works.

Weinbrot is fully aware that he is not describing a monolithic consciousness, and he gives the pro-Augustan elements of the period their fair share of his argument. It will not be his fault if the next spate of anthologies bears names like "The Anti-Augustan Age." His argument is more balanced than that; he recognizes that there is an imprecise but valid use of the term "Augustan," both in the Eighteenth century and in the Twentieth, to mean "nothing more than vague approbation of national strength, stable government, and support for the arts" (p. 51). Indeed, the very wealth of documentation that he can display for the anti-Augustan side of the proposition itself paradoxically points to the importance of the concept of Augustus and Augustanism in the period and restores a kind of negative correctness to the term he is discrediting.

On the literary side of the question, Weinbrot performs a valuable service particularly in emphasizing the importance of Juvenal as the uncorrupted voice of liberty and the kind of moral ascendancy he achieved, at least for some readers, over Horace because of Horace's association with or corruption by Augustus. Here, of course, matters become much more equivocal since the artistic accomplishment of Horace and Virgil seems almost never to have been called in question, and the actual role of these poets or their poems in any given "Augustan" work will have to be determined *ad hoc* in each individual case. We've known for some time, for instance, about the presence of Juvenalian passages and Juvenalian tone in many of Pope's Horatian imitations, but Weinbrot's information gives a new perspective from which to evaluate them and the "norm" of Horace in those poems. I am struck, as an example, by the kind of connection Weinbrot's information makes possible between the allusions to Persius and through him to Nero (Midas, Sporus) and the allusions to Ovid's poems from exile in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*: Nero the tyrant and Augustus the tyrant who exiled Ovid merge into George the Augustan tyrant, corrupter and represser of letters. If I am not convinced by Weinbrot's assertion that in some major respects "Horace is the enemy" (p. 217) for Pope, it is only because the very wealth of material he has presented seems to me to indicate a much more complex interrelation between the two poets than any of us has yet understood.

This is a solid and craftsmanly book; it should be read carefully and thoughtfully by every serious student of "Augustan" literature.

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Carlyle and Emerson: Their Long Debate by Kenneth Marc Harris. Cambridge
Harvard University Press, 1978. Pp. xii + 194. $12.50.

The Slender Human Word: Emerson's Artistry in Prose by William J. Sheick.
Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1978. Pp. xiv + 162. $9.00.

Both Emerson and Carlyle were enormously popular, and controversial, authors in their own time and each, with the coming of the twentieth century, suffered a serious decline in stature–Emerson for appearing to be a bland optimist, Carlyle for his reputation as a dyspeptic reactionary. For some time, however, scholars on both sides of the Atlantic have worked patiently to redeem these figures and rekindle interest in their work. In particular, as the centenary of Emerson's death approaches (1982), a new spurt of critical interest seems clearly in the making, at least in this country. Although Emerson has had some notable modern defenders (one thinks of F. O. Matthiessen, Stephen Whicher, Sherman Paul, Jonathan Bishop, Maurice Gonnaud, and Harold Bloom), he still has lacked the following of a Whitman, say, or a Melville among both critics and readers. For many, Emerson's work, along with that of Carlyle "and dozens of other respectable writers," as T. S. Eliot noted in 1935, falls into the chilly category of "improving reading."

But now it appears that a new generation of scholars has rediscovered both Emerson and his formidable friend and feels confident that even non-specialists can be brought to share an enthusiasm for their literary skill and moral pertinence. As Kenneth Harris notes at the end of his study, Emerson and Carlyle can "help us to look at ourselves with compassion and understanding." And William Scheick, annoyed at hearing colleagues apologize for assigning Emerson in literature classes, insists that "we should no longer deny Emerson his proper place among the artists, even more than among the thinkers, of nineteenth-century America. His essays are prose poems, as rich and complex as any modern literary critic might demand."

Harris's essay is spirited and engaging and manages to cover what might seem familiar ground in a new way. Anyone who knows anything about the Emerson-Carlyle relationship will recall that they both published books on "great men," the titles of which (*Representative Men* vs. *Heroes and Hero-Worship*) sufficiently suggest, it seems, Emerson's egalitarian bias as opposed to Carlyle's elitist one. Harris, however, in a chapter entitled "Self-Denial and Self-Reliance," takes us behind such clichés to a more subtle dialectic. He argues that the real difference between the two books is a question of biographical method rather than theory or choice of subject. Carlyle and Emerson, he notes, were men of ideas as well as men of letters, but they were never ideologues, and there is no reason to interpret their biographical and historical writings as illustrations of abstract concepts or theories, whether Transcendental or of some other variety. As biographers, they had a genuine interest in the people about whom they chose to write, and in their better work they displayed the knack of all skillful biographers to make their subjects come alive. Their philosophical ideas and attitudes acted as undercurrents, creating waves but rarely breaking the surface." Harris concludes this chapter with an original and thoughtful comparison of Carlyle's *Life of John Sterling* and Emerson's contribution to *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller*. The two other main chapters of this book, one setting *Nature* against *Sartor Resartus*, the other *Past and Present* against *English Traits*, are instructive exercises in comparative Transcendental metaphysics and politics; they also demonstrate at once how oddly similar and dissimilar were the careers and views of these writers.

Harris's judgments throughout are provocative, and I sometimes disagree with them. I do not believe that Anglo-American Transcendentalism can be said to have been unsuccessful in its attempt "to redefine the Christian soul" or that "Emerson did not share Carlyle's commitment to freedom of the will." Nor do I concur with Harris's view that in *The Conduct of Life* Emerson had not "extended or clarified his thinking, much less changed any of his ideas." Other readers may not agree with the notion that Carlyle loved "destruction for its own sake," although most will enjoy Harris's lively discussion of Carlyle's literary pyromania. And who will fail to applaud when Harris presents "that flower child of the nineteenth century, A. Bronson Alcott," brazenly telling the Scottish fire-eater, who was deeply immersed in the Puritan Revolution. "that instead of resurrecting Cromwell he was descending into the grave with him"?

William Scheick's study of Emerson's artistry focusses fundamentally on the intricate patterns of imagery that he finds uniting seemingly disparate essays. Scheick is sensitive to nuance of figure and language and has some especially illuminating things to say about such familiar pieces as "Self-Reliance," "Experience," and "Fate." Throughout his book, he tries to make a case for what he calls the "hieroglyph" as opposed to more conventional notions of symbol or image. According to the author, Emerson himself had an abiding interest in the "hieroglyph" as a "picture fusing material and spiritual realms, a figure or image visually communicating this secret symbolic relationship." Scheick instances Emerson's speaking, for example, "of Swedenborg's ability to read the world as 'a grammar of hieroglyphs.'" Now immediately a problem presents itself, it seems to me, for if we in fact turn to the passage in "Swedenborg, Or, the Mystic," from which Scheick is quoting we notice that Emerson is actually taking Swedenborg to task: "The warm, many-weathered, passionate-peopled world is to him a grammar of hieroglyphs, or an emblematic freemason's procession." Emerson attacks Swedenborg for claiming that every symbol has one secret meaning which he alone is competent to disclose. "The slippery Proteus is not so easily caught," Emerson insists, for "in nature, each individual symbol plays innumerable parts." I am therefore quite baffled when Scheick writes that, for Emerson, the hieroglyph "does not denote an arbitrary significance attributed to a symbol or emblem by a particular artist; rather it implies an intrinsic universal sign-value, a hidden self-explanatory moral or allegory, which the true artist intuits." This is precisely the view that Emerson assails. And, indeed, Scheick goes on to cite Emerson on the Poet as follows: "He makes the outward creation subordinate and merely a convenient alphabet to express thoughts and emotions." All this amounts to a considerable muddle, it seems to me, for Emerson is concerned with a theory of poetic metaphor-making and not with the unravelling of a mystical system of signs—that "emblematic freemason's procession" which he rejects in the Swedenborg essay. Fortunately, the author goes on to fudge his own distinction and writes of an essay being organized "around a central hieroglyph and coalescing imagery in relation to this governing image." We are thus left with more or less traditional discussions of image clusters, particularly as these images arise from or are reinforced by Emerson's interest in the root, or primitive, meanings of words.

This is all to the good and frequently leads to useful criticism. But some of Scheick's etymological exercises are dismaying. For example, he quotes Emerson on the great man's using the "planet for his pedestal" and then comments: "as the Latin *ped* (foot) suggests, once we follow the lines of rich relations which the great man has mapped for us, we 'shall never again be quite the miserable pedants we were.'" The two roots, *pes* and *pais* (child), are unfortunately quite distinct, so the alignment suggested here collapses. Again, Scheick cites Emerson's remark that "light, unsystematic, indomitable, will break into any cabin," and then leads us into a discussion about light being "indeed 'indomitable'—uncontainable (*domitare*) and un-dome-able (*domus*, house)." This is ingenious but wrong. *Domitare* means not "to contain" but "to tame"; it is not cognate with *domus*; and "indomitable" has nothing to do with houses. (Even if Scheick's etymology were correct, it is hard to see how Emerson's "pun" would work except according to the paradoxical principle of *lucus a non lucendo*.) In another place the author perplexingly derives *verdict* from "*versus* + *dictum*" (*verus* undoubtedly was meant). Nor is it right to say that *zodiac* "means *circle*"—though it does certainly imply one. And Emerson's remark that "every trivial fact . . . revisits the day, and delights all men," is surprisingly glossed as "this fact gives light (delights)." My students would greet that, I fear, with a resounding hiss.

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Hermann Hesse: Biography and Bibliography by Joseph Mileck. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977. Pp. vol. I: 806, vol. II: 628. $57.50, the set.

The work that went into producing these volumes staggers the mind. Mileck himself says that the project became an obsession, which is probably the only way it could have been done. Fourteen years in the making and costing thousands, it is a colossal repertorium of everything Hesse wrote—published or not—

organized by a meaningful system of classification with name and title indices. Everything we wanted to know about Hesse but did not know where to look is here. An all-encompassing bibliography of this kind is possible only after an author's *Nachlass* has become available. This work therefore makes unnecessary any more searching of the past.

The bibliography itself is divided into twelve categories. Mileck is his own best summarizer: "Parts I to III deal with the various editions of Hesse's collected works, his books and pamphlets, and his private publications. Part IV is an omnium-gatherum of published prose. Part V treats poetry, proceeding from major and minor publications to manuscript collections, tó individual poems both published and unpublished, and to an index of titles. Parts VI and VII are given to reviews and editorial work, Part VIII includes the published and unpublished letters of both Hesse and his correspondents, Part IX draws attention to the widespread translation of Hesse's works and Part X focuses upon his manuscripts. Part XI appends a miscellany of recordings, texts for the blind, and inclusions in textbooks for English-speaking students of German. Part XII is a bibliography of books, pamphlets, and dissertations about Hesse" (*Preface*, xiv). For each item, Mileck gives a history of publication that takes a work through its genesis, revisions, title changes, including dates of composition, submission, and publication. This bibliography is the kind of indispensable reference work necessary for serious scholarship. It also has another function: it can serve as "the basis for a critical historical tradition of Hesse's works" (*Preface*, xiv) for which there is a great need.

The seventy-five thousand word introduction "Life and Works" is a biographical-bibliographical odyssey through Hesse's life which Mileck divides into eight periods: Calw 1877-1895, Tübingen 1895-1899, Basel 1899-1904, Gaienhofen 1904-12, Bern 1912-1919, and Montagnola 1919-1931, 1931-1945, 1945-1962. Each section follows the same structural principle: a relevant account of Hesse's surface life, of his artistic-spiritual development, of his publications, and of his changing fortunes with the public. Above all, the reader is struck by how much Hesse's personal life figures into what he writes.

Hesse the man emerges from Mileck's pages as a neurotic of massive proportions. He was a man whose inner equilibrium was ruined by a suffocating, religious education. Like any religion, Pietism is crystallized around a particular moral-religious myth. It accepts some of man's primal drives while others are declared of the Devil and are suppressed. Pietistic values became Hesse's second, and worse, nature because he grew up denying a good fifty percent of what it is to be human. A precocious child was turned into a tortured misfit incapable of accepting himself, mankind, or the world for the imperfect realities they are (I, 80). Hesse knew that he was living a lie, despised himself for it, struggled to break free, and hated himself for failing. However viciously he attacked the deficiences of his age, he always put himself on the rack first, reviling and torturing himself in the most savage outbursts of self loathing. Solitary, difficult to get along with, and self preoccupied, he sought the therapy of self knowledge through literary self analysis. Consequently, his crippled personality floats through his works like an unpleasant aroma, particularly in the novels after World War I. Emil Sinclair's agonizing quest, Siddhartha's soul sickness, Harry Haller's appalling isolation and self contempt, his suicidal tendencies, and finally his orphic descent into the city's throbbing night life all have their real life counterparts. Hesse and his work are like two mirrors set facing each other, one a symbolical-mythological reflection of the òther. This close relationship between the artist and his work brings up a point of literary criticism.

Ever since Flaubert, James, and Eliot proclaimed the theory of *impersonalité*, two generations of writers and critics have been saying that we must not confuse the work with the man or the man with the work. Artists write impersonally. Even though the man may be imperfect, what he creates is pure; it is uninfected by his personal feelings, his rages, and his torments. When a piece of art leaves the writer's pen, it becomes an impersonal artifact independent of the author, the reader, and the critic. It has a life of its own. Hence, the writer's personality is irrelevant for comprehension. The meaning is inherent in the work and we do not need biography to get at it.

A more recent view has it that the writer and his art are one. The author does write with his rages and passions, his deficiencies and fantasies. Art grows out of the man and it expresses what he is as a biologically and sociologically conditioned person. Writers do not create impersonally and critics do not read impersonally. *Impersonalite* is simply a ready-made, banal theory which relieves the critic of the responsibility of thinking through the complex relationship between the man and his work.

Mileck does not enter this debate. Yet from reading his book, it is clear that our understanding of Hesse's art canont be complete until we think through the relationship between them. Mileck's contribution makes not only this possible but virtually every other kind of research as well.

JOHN D. SIMONS

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What Will Have Happened: A Philosophical and Technical Essay on Mystery Stories by Robert Champigny. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1977. Pp. 183.

Anatomy of the Spy Thriller by Bruce Merry. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977. Pp. 253.

Until fairly recently, the analysis and criticism of popular narrative genres like the detective story or the spy thriller was largely in the hands of fans, collectors, and practitioners. Or these genres served as data for anatomization of mass tastes, ideologies and mythologies. The two books before us however, are attempts by professional academics to use the methods of literary and philosophical analysis to explain the detective story and the spy thriller by defining their structures, their artistic characteristics, and their most basic meanings. These are, in effect, " poetics " of these genres, proposing to do for the detective story and the spy story what Aristotle once did for tragedy. While neither of these two works will ever dominate its respective field in the fashion of Aristotle's treatise, each makes a useful contribution and raises interesting questions about the definition and interpretation of popular narrative genres.

Prof. Champigny insists, first of all, that the mystery story is a perfectly legitimate form of narrative art, as capable of esthetic achievement as any other kind of story. He sees "nothing wrong with the mystery genre itself" (5) because, in his view, the mystery story is, like all other forms of narrative art, a "ludic-esthetic" activity. Therefore, the mystery story can serve not only as a focus of enjoyment in its own right, but as a form which provides "revealing tests of narrative logic and art" (15). In his analysis, Prof. Champigny attempts to define the distinctive characteristics of the mystery form and to differentiate it from other kinds of narrative art.

As he sees it, the mystery story is fundamentally a "hermeneutic tale," meaning that "the goal and result of the narrated process is the determination of some events anterior to the ending of the process" (13). From this axiom, Champigny attempts to define the distinctive characteristics of the mystery form and views as particularly central to the mystery story. In his first section, he deals with the special requirements of hermeneutic tales in regard to such problems of narrative construction as the creation of fictional character and event, the establishment of a sense of probability and necessity, and the treatment of morality and justice in a story which deals with crime and its investigation. He argues, for example, that because the goal of the hermeneutic tale is a precise determination of "what will have happened," questions of motive and thus of characterization are ancillary rather than central to the form. This constitutes one of the key differences between a hermeneutic tale and a "straight story." Perhaps Champigny's most valuable contribution in this section is his emphasis on the idea that the construction of a mystery is an esthetic rather than a conceptual or moral matter. In other words, it is not the inevitable logic of its argument that makes a mystery work, but the author's skill in using stylistic and structural devices to create conviction in the solution he, in the end, espouses. Similarly, that the mystery story usually, though not always, ends in the apprehension of a criminal is not, in Champigny's view a moral statement. Instead, "what a murder story can do . . . is to use departures from socioreligious imperatives and the substitution of esthetic justice for legal justice in such a way as to raise moral questions implicitly, instead of spiriting them away" (51). Though this seems a valid and useful emphasis in the consideration of mystery stories, unfortunately, Champigny does not develop his concept of esthetic justice and esthetic logic fully enough for this reader to be quite sure of what he really means.

The second part of Champigny's book is, in my opinion. the clearest and most useful. In this section he takes up the mystery story's way of handling such literary elements as plot sequence, viewpoint, and atmosphere. In particular, his discussion of viewpoint effectively bears out his general contention that the mystery story is a distinctive and esthetically respectable genre with its own complex and fascinating esthetic problems to be solved. The necessity of concealment and misdirection in the major part of the narrative makes the creation and sustaining of a narrative viewpoint a peculiarly difficult problem in the genre and Champigny does an excellent job in analysing how both successful and unsuccessful texts have dealt with this challenge.

On the whole, *What Will Have Happened* is valuable for its general emphasis on the esthetic dimension of the mystery genre and for the many particular insights it offers into the process of mystery construction. But most readers will find the book very tough going because of the opacity of its narrative style, and its excessive deployment of philosophical jargon. Here is a not untypical example: "The ideal identity between cognitive induction and analytic deduction that a ratiocinative tale may project involves pseudoanalyticity as well as pseudo-cognitivity" (35). I suppose one might eventually learn to swallow that mouthful, but all too often such dense clots of polysyllables turn out on unpacking to be rather obvious notions that conceal their simplicity in a flood of terminological mystification. I think the above statement means only that the appearance of logic in the detective's reasoning from clues often turns out on closer examination to be highly contrived.

Bruce Merry's *Anatomy of the Spy Thriller* is a far more lucid and engagingly written study than *What Will Have Happened*. Consequently, it should prove more useful to most readers than Champigny's study. Like Champigny, Merry insists on viewing his genre as a fundamentally esthetic problem. He insists that the portrayal of espionage in the thriller has little to do with the actual practices of intelligence agencies and offers many examples of the difference between thriller conventions and actual espionage practices. Instead, Merry argues that the thriller is essentially a modern version of the epic and attempts to substantiate this thesis by giving many instances of parallels between Homeric and other traditional epics and the contemporary spy thriller. As he sees it, the thriller takes its shape from the adaptation of traditional literary conventions. Its structure and appeal are to be understood primarily in terms of these conventions.

The main body of Merry's work then, consists of commentary on the basic spy thriller structures and conventions. This discussion is excellent, albeit rather too rambling and unsystematic in exposition. A tighter organization would have saved a good deal of unnecessary repetition and made the *Anatomy* easier to use. Nonetheless, by the time he is finished, Merry has effectively defined most of the standard structural devices and conventions of the spy thriller and shown how they function esthetically. One of his key ideas is that "a well-made spy thriller aims at the elusive quality of 'unputdownability.' It wants to be read all at once, or at a minimum of sittings" (49). With a detailed analysis of Frederick Forsyth's *The Day of the Jackal*, which he considers as "the model example of the genre" (59), Merry shows how certain distinctive thriller structures work together to create this quality. One of these devices is what he calls "global simultaneity" or the concurrent development of several plot lines at different geographical locations. Of course, this is nothing but the old "meanwhile back at the fort" or narrative cross-cutting device which has long been a staple of suspenseful adventure stories, but Merry shows how a skillful spy thriller writer like Forsyth can intensify both the suspense and the sense of significance in his story by shaping widely scattered locations and plotlines toward a climactic confrontation between protagonist and antagonist in a single place. Merry also describes another important structural device used with great effectiveness by Forsyth. *Thes Day of the Jackal* is constructed in such a way that as the book proceeds, the pace of the narrative intensifies with more material covered in fewer pages. Thus, "the reader is obliged to accelerate his speed of consumption, since action and information is packed into less and less space as the story progresses to its climax" (50).

Anatomy of the Spy Thriller offers many interesting and valid observations about the distinctive narrative structures characteristic of the genre as well as discussions of its stereotypical character roles and episodes. In addition Merry attempts to differentiate between different subgenres of the spy thriller. He offers some interesting, though oversimplified observations on the difference between British and American versions of the thriller and he also attempts to describe the salient characteristics of spy thrillers of what he calls the first and second generations, i. e., the pre- and post-World War II eras. This, also is too broad a characterization, for there are at least four major phases in the history of the spy story: the work of Le Queux, Buchan, Rohmer, Yates, *et al.*, in the years just before and after World War I; the writings of Ambler, Greene and others in the 1930s and 1940s; the romantic revival of Fleming and his imitators in the 1950s; and the anti-heroic spy thriller of Deighton and LeCarre of more recent times. Though he lacks a clear picture of the genre's evolution, Merry does give some useful insights into these different variations on the thriller.

From a theoretical point of view, Merry's book has many of the same strengths and weaknesses as Champigny's *What Will Have Happened*. Both attempt to deal with their genres as esthetic constructions and to define the primary structural problems faced by writers in these genres. Both apparently believe that because of the esthetic character of their genres they are as capable of producing good art as any other genre. As Champigny insists there is nothing inherently deficient about the hermeneutic tale so Merry asserts that "it takes skill and ability to compose a good thriller and there is clearly no inherent reason why a book about Intelligence work should stand less chance of gaining its writer a literary prize than a book about prison camps" (158). Insofar as this perspective stands as a corrective to the view that popular narrative genres are totally lacking in esthetic significance, these two books make a valuable contribution, showing us that the mystery story and the spy thriller can be seen to have their own distinctive poetics. However, it also seems to me that these two books are false to the nature of popular genres by treating them as if they were universal generic categories, such as tragedy or comedy or romance. It is true, I think, that mystery and adventure constitute universal, or at least transcultural, archetypes, but such particular versions of these archetypes as the spy thriller or the various types of detective story are cultural genres. Their meaning and their artfulness derive not only from universal structural principles, but from the rich complex of cultural meanings which they embody. If we are to understand both the appeal and the artistic possibilities inherent in these popular genres, we must also understand the cultural meanings that they carry. Merry is, I think, only partly right when he says that the spy thriller is a contemporary form of the Homeric epic. Actually, there are parallels between these literary forms because both partake to some extent of the archetypal patterns of adventure. To this extent, it makes sense to treat *Goldfinger* and the *Iliad* in the same terms, but only to this extent. To deal more complexly with the art of the mystery story or the spy thriller, we must also ask why it is that the detective and the spy have become such important contemporary embodiments of the archetypes of mystery and adventure, and what are the artistic implications of these contemporary cultural symbolizations. Unfortunately, neither *What Will Have Happened* nor *Anatomy of the Spy Thriller* adds much to our understanding of these problems.

JOHN G. CAWELTI

University of Chicago

Nature and the Victorian Imagination edited by U. C. Knoepflmacher and G. B. Tennyson. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978. Pp. xxiii + 519. $25.00.

This beautifully edited and produced book is clearly a model for interdisciplinary thematic collections. The editors have chosen a suitably broad but limitable topic, gathered a set of remarkably fine new essays to examine it, and provided a richness of pictorial support. Naturally not all of the essays will appeal to all readers equally. Here are some of my favorites as a sampling. Ellen E. Frank's "The Domestication of Nature: Five Houses in the Lake District" shows how "Victorians contrive to have Nature, however distant, real but no longer threatening." Chauncey C. Loomis' "The Arctic Sublime" is an intriguing study of the Victorian fascination with arctic exploration. Bruce Johnson's "'The Perfection of Species' and Hardy's Tess" is a well-argued original reading of Hardy's tantalizing fictional creation. Martin Meisel's "'Half Sick of Shadows': The Aesthetic Dialogue in Pre-Raphaelite Painting" offers detailed help in understanding individual PRB paintings and the role of nature in the PRB aesthetic. George Landow's "The Rainbow: A Problematic Image" is a splendidly thorough examination of an important literary and pictorial image.

The many other essays—twenty-four in all—are equally rewarding, from George H. Ford's fine examination of the cottage motif and what it signified in Victorian literature, to David B. Wilson's account of the secularization of Victorian thinking about physical nature, to Frederick Kirchhoff's illuminating study of Ruskin's "floral mythology." The essays cover many areas, including the arts, history, and the sciences and are organized into sections such as "The Taming of Space," "Explorations," and "Systems of Knowledge" which help the reader to find a coherent relationship in the collection, as does the considerate system of cross-referencing.

This book sets a standard in many ways (even the printing, photographic reproduction, and proof-reading are superb). Let us hope that others will have the courage and patience to imitate this achievement.

JOHN R. REED

Wayne State University

The Tragic Vision of Joyce Carol Oates by Mary Kathryn Grant, R. S. M. Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1978. Pp. 167. $9.75.

As a critic Joyce Carol Oates has written extensively about forms of tragedy. In this first book-length study of her work, Mary Kathryn Grant, R. S. M. focuses on the tragic vision which informs Oates's imaginative works, isolating especially the loss of community in the "diminished urban world" and the centrality of violence. Documenting convincingly the devastating intensity and ubiquity of violence—both physical and rhetorical—in Oates's fictive world, Grant finds that it grows out of a sense of personal impotence and powerlessness and that, unlike the often redemptive violence in the works of Flannery O'Connor, violence in Oates is destructive and unliberating. Catharsis is withheld in Oates's tragic vision. Grant is hard-pressed to find some shred of affirmation to support Oates's extra-literary insistence upon the redemptive potential of human beings: "her art to date seemingly places undue weight on merely getting through, enduring the struggle of human existence."

This study offers perceptive observations about facets of Oates's work, but its conceptual design restricts Grant to piecemeal analysis. No novel, story, or poem is treated as an aesthetic whole; rather, images, characters, and ideas are abstracted out of various works as illustrations of Grant's thesis. As she moves back and forth among the works, Grant not only places great demands on the reader (especially since volume citations are often not given) but she also denies fair consideration to what Oates calls the "hypotheses about human experience" proposed in each of her works. I do not think that violence is always unliberating in Oates's world, nor are her characters always trapped and incapable of transcendence. This study does not, in my opinion, give sufficient attention to the visionary possibilities implicit in some of Oates's fictional constructs. But then it was apparently written before the publication of more recent works (*Crossing the Border*, *The Assassins*, *Childwold*, and *Night-Side*) where Oates's visionary turn is more pronounced.

JOANNE V. CREIGHTON

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SUSAN STEWART*

Some Riddles and Proverbs of Textuality: An Essay in Literary Value and Evaluation

Un-dish-cover the fish, or
dishcover the riddle
—*Through the Looking Glass*

The proverb is something musty
—*Hamlet*

Value, valor, valure. How to value experience, and particularly those experiences beyond experience—the experiences of fictions? If, as Morse Peckham suggests, seventy-five percent of our conversation consists of value statements, this state of talk probably has arisen from its own conditions, for much of everyday life is spent engaged in performances which bear a necessary relation to those performances we more formally subject to evaluation.[1] While aesthetic activities bring our attention to problems of evaluation, indeed, continually present us with a " crisis " of value which can only be solved through evaluation, evaluation is a characteristic of our ongoing everyday lives as well. Whatever we subject to evaluation has a quality of being "performed," and since we live with an ever-present possibility of "messing up," it seems that almost all of our behavior is thereby endowed with this quality of performance. And these performances of everyday life are constantly modelling themselves upon, modifying, and transforming, the shape of those activities we bother to frame as "performances." The consequences of evaluation in this quotidian sphere are just as real as, count just as much as, the consequences of evaluation in any other domain. In their own best interests, our everyday lives are filled with reckoning, lining up, deciding in terms of, discoursing on " I should have said," measuring means against ends and ends against means, ultimately determining " the worthwhile." [2]

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[1] Morse Peckham, *Man's Rage for Chaos* (New York: Schocken, 1965), p. 311.

[2] For this point and many others in this essay I am grateful to Barbara Herrnstein Smith and her ongoing work on value and evaluation. I would also like to thank John Szwed for his careful reading of an earlier version of this essay.

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Evaluation is an activity which not only goes on "after the fact," after the performance, it also determines the next fact, the next performance. It is a process of discrimination and selection which is shaped by, and gives depth to, tradition. On the one hand, evaluation serves the interests of legitimation. Hence, as Berger and Luckmann have pointed out in *The Social Construction of Reality*, "It is important to understand that legitimation has a cognitive as well as a normative element. In other world, legitimation is not just a matter of 'values.' It always implies 'knowledge' as well."[3] To evaluate something is to give it an integrity, a boundary, which it may not have had prior to evaluation. From this we arrive at not only aesthetic wholes, but wholes of aesthetic experience—"Did you have a good time?" "How was the show?"—wholes which manipulate the boundary between text and context. And, on the other hand, evaluation places experience in jeopardy; it singles out aspects of our experience and thereby makes them problematic. Once you point to the integrity of the text, you have made it vulnerable, made it suspect. Evaluation proceeds by rule-making and exemplification, two procedures which are brought to the fore only when there is a question regarding "how to proceed." To give example, to state the rule, makes the rule suspect and points to a gap, a flaw, a tear, in the ongoing discourse of everyday life. Evaluation always points thereby to a weakness in the text of value.

Just as formal, recognized and recognizable, evaluation tends to cluster around those situations which are clearly marked performances, so work on value and evaluation has clustered around the study of particular performances—the manufacture and use of literary texts. Literary value and evaluation present us with models for the evaluation of literature, but they also provide us with models for the evaluation of the experience of literature and models for the evaluation of experience. Like any process of legitimation, the evaluation of literature produces an institutionalized, canonized and specialized body of knowledge. Its every gesture defines a community as well as a "body" of literature, and literature acquires a taken-for-granted status as it becomes another franchise in society's manufacture of meaning.

Consider the history of "literature." Literature first appeared in English in the fourteenth century as a term which marked off those who had acquired polite learning through reading. To be literary was to be literate, to be well-read and well-educated. As Raymond Williams has suggested, the medieval and Renaissance use of literature served to isolate the skills of reading and the qualities of the book from other domains of experience. And with the advent of Romanticism the term was further split, now designating only "imaginative writing." [4] A gap had appeared between the experience of literature and the experience of the world. Concomitantly, "criticism" and "taste" came to be used to define not only a canonized body of texts, but a community of readers. Each critical gesture thereby becomes a statement of membership; the citing of examples the articulation of a community of rule. And with the articulation of rule comes the problem of exception. Hence David Hume's dilemma: "We are pleased in the course of our reading, with pictures and characters that resemble objects which are found in our own age or country rather than those which describe a different set of customs," and yet, "The general principles of taste are uniform in human nature: where others vary in their judgments, some defect or perversion of the faculties may commonly be remarked: proceeding either from prejudice, want of practice or want of delicacy." [5]

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[3] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor, 1967), p. 95.

Hume's position is not merely an historical one. As recently as *The Anatomy of Criticism*, Northrop Frye wrote: "good taste follows and is developed by the study of literature: its precision results from knowledge but does not produce knowledge." [6] And John Ellis tautologically contended in his *Theory of Literary Criticism* that "to talk descriptively of highly valued literary texts is to talk of their value." [7] By this point, value is considered to be something intrinsic to the text, something which the text can contribute to the world.

But how does the world endow the text with value? How does value work, what are the ways in which we evaluate? To frame the question this way is to make the text suspect, to ask how the text has acquired its textuality, to ask how quality (property) has been turned into quality (worth). Consider the experience of the child in obtaining literary "competence." Most of the child's early experience with fictions involves what Berger and Luckmann have called "a systematizing and giving name to." Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Mary Sanches suggest that much of the difference between adult language and child language is quantitative, but that in order to generate a model for child speech one would also have to account for qualitative differences, especially since, for a young child, the phonological component of language is much more strongly organized than the syntactic, semantic or sociolinguistic component.[8] Thus the young child often enjoys playing with sound for its own sake, and this is the first type of verbal art which children master and enjoy. Work by Richard Bauman and John McDowell, and by Catherine Garvey,[9] points to the child's development of literary competence as a movement toward increasing facility with manipulating frame and situation, playing with the ambiguity of text and context. McDowell writes, "Riddling as an enculturating device allows children to work through the dual vectors of language, towards order and anti-order, in a stimulating and enjoyable social context. In riddling, at various stages, children learn to formulate culturally acceptable classifications; to articulate the classifications at variance with cultural conventions; and finally to assess language and indeed classification, as arbitrary instruments, reflecting only partially the continuous texture of experience."[10]

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[4] Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 150-154.

[5] David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," *Philosophy of Art and Aesthetics from Plato to Wittgenstein*, ed. Frank A. Tillman and Steven M. Cahn (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 27.

[6] Northrop Frye, *The Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 27.

[7] John Ellis, *The Theory of Literary Criticism, A Logical Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 102.

Whenever fictive forms are used to play with framing, whether they be on the level of "I've got a great knock knock joke. Ok. You start," or Orsen Welles's *War of the Worlds*, they provide us with strategies for negotiating changes, for reordering, for accomplishing "shake-ups." Elli Köngas-Maranda has contended that this function of the literature of play is a cross-cultural one: "Where myths prove the validity of land claims, the authority of social and cultural rules, or the fitness of native conceptual classifications, riddles make a point of playing with conceptual borderlines and crossing them for the pleasure of showing that things are not quite so stable as they appear."[11] Whether this is the case or not cross-culturally, it seems that those skills which are so often cited as being characteristic of making evaluations—an ability to make increasingly fine discriminations and then move to the level of abstraction or general case—are also the skills which children acquire in learning to use metaphors and riddles based upon metaphors. Barbara Leondar's work on infant cognition, for example, suggests that "the developmental sequence is a move toward increasingly downward schematization, discriminations and then toward abstraction."[12] Hence the cognitive gesture used in making metaphors is the cognitive gesture used in making evaluations.

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[8] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Mary Sanches, "Children's Traditional Speech Play and Child Language," *Speech Play*, ed. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), pp. 65-110.

[9] See Richard Bauman, "The Development of Competence in Solicitational Routines: Children's Folklore and Informal Learning," *Working Papers in Sociolinguistics*, No. 34, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Austin, May 1976); John McDowell, "Riddling and Enculturation: A Glance at the Cerebral Child," *Ibid.*, No. 36 (July 1976); Catherine Garvey, "Some Properties of Social Play," *Play: Its Role in Development and Evolution*, ed. J. S. Bruner, A. Jolly and K. Sylva (Middlesex: Penguin, 1976), pp. 570-583.

[10] McDowell, p. 12.

To play with metaphor is to play with multiple levels of order and classification. Gregory Bateson's work asserts that cognizance of differing levels of order is the very basis of play, indeed, the very basis of communication in that communication depends upon an ability to manage multiple arrangements of texts and contexts. The giving of the message "this is play" involves saying "that *this* (play) behavior doesn't mean the same thing as does this behavior (fighting, etc.) which play represents."[13] With play, and consequently with fictions (which are always a kind of play in that they are a reframing of experience), we thereby become aware of paradoxes in communication, aware of how text can be manipulated by context and context by text. These paradoxes endow communication with a "play" or "give," and thereby provide us with what William Fry has called "levels of living":

> As one is progressing through any particular portion of one's life, one is involved, on one level, in the explicit surface program. One is also involved in many other levels, in many conscious and unconscious programs that are implicit to the so-called "object" or thing—i. e. the "ongoing life process." It is as if we lead many different lives at the same time,

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[11] Elli Köngas-Maranda, "Riddles and Riddling," *Journal of American Folklore*, 89(1976), 131.

[12] Barbara Leondar, "Metaphor and Infant Cognition," *Poetics*, 4 (1975), 273-287.

[13] Gregory Bateson, "The Message 'This is Play,'" *Conferences on Group Processes*, ed. Bertram Schaffner, Josiah Macy Foundation, (Princeton, Transactions of the Second Conference, October 9-12, 1955).

> all on different levels of abstraction from the other, and all interrelate and comment on each other. . . . A situation, for instance, becomes a situation joke when through the operation of a punch line, the rules for conceiving reality are changed.[14]

Because such fictions enable us to imagine new alternatives to cultural problems, to engage in cognitive, and thereby social, change, one might want to conclude that those forms which most felicitously break down our conceptual categories are those which are most valuable to us. This may be true for that large segment of the population, or that population at any given time, which wants to break down reality, but this would foreclose our interest in other pleasures of the text. Roland Barthes has suggested, "on the left, knowledge, commitment, combat are drawn against 'mere delectation' (and yet: what if knowledge itself were *delicious*?)." [15] And thus we take delight not only in the new, but in the known re-encountered. Again, work on the pleasures of children is revealing for an inquiry into the pleasures of adults. Edith Jacobson's early work with infants suggests that laughter and smiling can be functions of the dangerous turned commonplace; for "when intense, especially rhythmical stimulation of the whole or a part of the motor system produces a sudden or surprisingly fast enjoyable experience which, though first suggesting danger, arouses a pleasant anticipation of relief, laughter comes about as a finally intensely pleasurable motor release." [16]

It is an idea as old as Plato that pleasure arises from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing. Whereas in the dismantling type of play noted above, the known was rearranged and dispersed into context, here the known is put into a series of contexts and apprehension is aroused by a confrontation with the text in new surroundings. We are still engaged in play and its awareness of multiple levels of meaning, but here the operations performed are different. The pleasure arising from the resolution of an apprehension may partially account for our enjoyment of repetition of performance. We may know a joke's punch line or a story's end, but there is a possibility that this time something may be different. If an audience thinks it has heard a joke before, punch lines, rather than any other part of the joke narrative, will be checked. Skillful narrators often make use of such strained expectations. The humor of many catch tales, for example, rests on this strategy.

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[14] William Fry, *Sweet Madness: A Study of Humor* (Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1963), p. 53.

[15] Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), p. 23.

[16] Edith Jacobson, "The Child's Laughter," *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 2 (1946), 44.

It may be possible to classify genres on the basis of the operations they entail regarding the known and unknown. In "get it" genres such as riddles (where the real cognitive "work" is done after the answer is given), jokes, puns and humorous narratives, a new meaning is often made out of the old, the known gets transformed by a final gesture, and the performer acts as "bricoleur." In other genres such as myth, tragedy and legend, the known is omnipresent, but always threatened by the possibility of an "unnerving" closure. Barthes suggests this when he writes, "of all readings that of tragedy is the most perverse: I take pleasure in hearing myself tell a story *whose end I know*. I know and I don't know, I act toward myself as though I did not know: I know perfectly well Oedipus will be unmasked, that Danton will be guillotined, but *all the same*." [17] He says "there is here an effacement of pleasure and a progression of bliss." And bliss is proximate to fear, fear of ending, of disruption and unforeseen consequences.

Do we use texts to remake the universe, to test the universe, to affirm the universe? The answer is probably yes to all questions. M. K. Halliday has suggested in a discussion of "anti-languages" [18] that such languages are vehicles of resocialization. "They create an alternative reality: the process is one not of construction but of reconstruction," and, in the sense that fictions use social discourse as a base for reconstructing categories and focusing on ambiguities, fictions are anti-languages. But Halliday qualifies this by saying that "the languages of literature are in a certain sense anti-languages, or rather, literature is both language and anti-language at the same time. A work of literature is its author's contribution to the reality-generating conversation of society, and its status reflects the status that it has in the sociosemiotic scheme." [19] Not every text, not every fiction, interrupts the reality of everyday life. Those texts which stand in a contiguous relationship to that reality, the texts of "realism," take a stance designed to conceal the seam between text and world. The world testifies to the reality of the text, the mark or frame of textuality is erased and smoothed over. In contrast, texts which are properly made of "anti-language" stand in a paradoxical and metaphorical relation to the reality of everyday life, pointing to the mark or frame breaking them off from that reality.

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[17] Barthes, pp. 47-48.

[18] M. K. Halliday, "Anti-languages," *American Anthropologist*, 78 (1976), 570-584.

[19] Halliday, 583.

Talking about what we do with texts always leads to talking about their value, for value is the name of the time invested in using them: time is value. But what we do with texts, break down the world or place the world in a new context or replace the world with an alternative world, is not what we do when we evaluate. When we evaluate we look at the text and the activities of using the text and place that use within the flow of activity which makes up our everyday lives. "A great story" or "a great joke" is not only a text which may or may not be better than any other story or joke, but a text which is worthwhile in any case. And since "reading" involves not only the experience of the text, but an experience of engaging the text's community of readers, the articulation of its value will always be a statement of membership regarding that community. Reading may be a hobby, or at the other extreme, it may be a way of life; Borges writes, "I first and foremost, think of myself as a reader."[20] Perhaps the best example of this fusing of reading and life is the "Dewars' Profile" series of advertisements where a book review becomes a person review and a person review becomes a book review and it is all designed to pass on a tradition which includes the book, the man or woman, and, hopefully, the Dewars.

The uses of textuality flow in and out of our everyday lives. Fictions, especially, are valuable tools for re-framing situations. By asserting their ontological status we undermine the reality-at-hand. And their uses for such purposes are, as well, subject to evaluation, an evaluation which proceeds within a code of "limits." Erving Goffman, in a discussion of "make-believe," suggests "the function of play has been commented on for many centuries, to little avail. However, it is probably possible to say something about the location of playfulness in the flow of activity, since playfulness is favored at certain junctures in social intercourse."[21] Goffman goes on to discuss the limits of playfulness, what is considered "in good taste" at any given time and place. Seeing the limits of texuality in this way allows us to ask about the appropriateness of the use of fictions rather than the appropriateness of individual fictions. Not recognizing this difference has always put the legislators of pornography in a quandary, for text has always held their attention more than function in context.

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[20] Jorge Luis Borges, Intro. to *Selected Poems, 1923-1967*, trans. Norman Thomas DiGiovanni (New York: Delta, 1968), p. xv.

[21] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 49.

The uses of fictions and reading which move into and affect the flow of activity may be playful, or they may simply exploit the status of readers and texts in a situation. Fictions can be used to "lighten the situation," to "make folks feel more at ease," to "get out of a jam," "to make time pass," or simply tó reverse the roles between audience and performer. The text can assert its importance over talk, for example, on a commuter train, in the library or over the proverbial breakfast table. And while talk can be used to turn off vacuum cleaners, reading can be used to turn off radios. Perhaps the most powerful discourse is the quoted text, the text which has transcended its context of origin. The quoted text acquires the weight of tradition, the weight of being "age-old," true across a range of contexts. And at the same time quotation reveals the ambivalence between text and context. To quote is to mark discourse as the "so-called," to give the discourse a suspicious integrity. The quote contaminates all of language, to use the quotation *mark* is to displace the origin of the rest of discourse. We are left with a plagiarism, a scandal.

The uses of texts extend into the flow of social life in a profound kind of intertextuality. It is not only that the self constitutes the fictive universe, but that if one grants the fictive nature of the symbolic universe, the self becomes a composite of all the fictions it has made or engaged in. The borders of the fictive universe shift from age to age; thus in literary history we can see an interplay of characters and Characters. Literary biography, letters, diaries and other "evidential" texts all help us to assemble our fictions about fictions. Boris Tomasevskij's "Literature and Biography" suggests that some ages have authors, others don't: "especially since the Romantics the author becomes a witness to and a living participant in, his novels, a living hero. A double transformation takes place; heroes are taken for living personages and poets become living heroes—their biographies become poems." [22]

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[22] Boris Tomasevskij, "Literature and Biography," *Readings In Russian Poetics*, ed. Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971), p. 50.

The parameters of "the text" shift constantly, incorporating history, biography and theology on the one hand, and morphemes, phonemes, syntax and rhyme on the other. This expansion and contraction of the scene of reading is much like the kind of "nesting" work which children often do in their verbal art:

> In mein Grossvaters Garten stand ein Baum,
> In dem Baume lag eine Nest,
> In dem Neste lag ein Ei,
> In dem Eie lag ein Brief,
> In dem Briefe stand's geschrieben
> Wer auf hundert kommt muss Kriegen,
> 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100.

These fictions do their dismantling of categories by moving outward toward the largest possible universe or inward to the smallest possible molecule.

Augustine's shock at seeing St. Ambrose reading silently, and Barthes's proposal that we "write aloud: let us talk about it as though it existed" [23] perhaps mark extreme changes in the social space of reading and writing. To see, as Barthes does, the "classic" as that which we return to, that which we give time to, that which we reinvent with each age, is to harken back to the intertexuality of self-as-fiction and the fictions of the self. We invent the favorite, the text invested over time with desire and a special form of re-articulation. And at other edges we have the fashion, the text invested over space with a kind of immediacy and urgency. A favorite can be seen as a function of context, as a sense of "our own style" which changes throughout our lives. On the one hand we have the harmonious self, confident surely that there must be values for life, and on the other hand the self-in-flux, constantly interpreting and re-interpreting its styles. The first may be the myth that allows the riddle of the second to keep moving.

It is not only that by our favorites we go about searching for "our kind of people," but more often than not "our kind of people" have passed down the text in the first place. From this we might infer that changes in reading have marked changes in sensibility—that changes in reading are changes which mark a re-evaluation of the shape of consciousness. Once it is known how the *name* came about, the legitimation is weakened. In this sense, a theory of value can only reach a critical point when it is a critique of value itself. We may assume that a *theory* of value could only arise in a symbolic universe where abstraction is valued over specific cases, where change is valued as the normal and proper order of things, and where the re-examination of premises holds a kind of moral imperative. A culture which holds to a belief that a text is open to multiple interpretations is likely to believe that the self is constantly changing and that the child's acquisition of skills for performing and evaluating is a kind of development. If the text never changed it would be because we readers who constitute the text never change—and that is surely an unallowable proposition.

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[23] Barthes, p. 66.

Much of our understanding in situations goes unarticulated, especially where the apprehension of performance is shared. We do not offer step-by-step accounts of the operations we performed in apprehending a given performance unless we are in a formal learning situation, as when children are called on to " explain " their reading to a teacher. We are often at a loss to decide where to begin and end in telling someone who was absent from the scene of an event what it was about. We find it much easier in most situations to give an evaluation. At a play opening, someone will say " I can't say I understood it, but it was really very good." Our evaluations are, however, usually highly articulated and are themselves subject to re-evaluation. When we ask, "What did you think? " after a movie, it's not that we want to know what that person thought as he or she watched the movie, but that we want an evaluation of the film. Here again, we see evaluations moving temporally from increasingly fine discriminations to final abstraction. We are called upon to " say why we like it," moving simultaneously to finer points with reference to the text and more abstract points with reference to the value of the text. While interpretation proceeds by a gesture of dismantling and rearranging, evaluation proceeds by a contiguous gesture that links the text to the world.

Hence the parameters of the performance event move in and out of the flow of activity—a " good movie " is often plotted against " a good time "—and, at the same time, the parameters of the performance event are determined by evaluation. Evaluation is, in this sense, always a method of composition. Understanding, according to our system of strategies for dealing with events, is a matter of managing a set of interpretations. Usually we grant no one privileged, holistic understanding. When we do grant such understanding, it is institutionalized, given to priests, professors and judges and the interpretive process is temporarily "shut down." But even here we may not mean that the person's interpretation is more worthwhile so much as we mean that this person's status makes listening to him or her worthwhile no matter what is said.

Evaluations are prescriptive and canonical, and in this sense they are very much like proverbs. We have a range of terms which span a "universe of good," yet which in fact can oppose each other. Just as we have a proverb repertoire which includes "look before you leap" and "he who hesitates is lost," so we have a battery of evaluative terms which will name clarity and ambiguity, symmetry and asymmetry, simplicitly and richness, convention and novelty, proportion and disparity, uniformity and variety, harmony and dissonance, unity and complexity. The way we use the terms depends upon our prior experience with texts, with evaluations, with what we expect the text and evaluation to accomplish and, indeed, with the entire symbolic universe.

Evaluation and value are always evaluation and value *for*, and the "for" will encompass all the uses of fictions in the flow of activity making up our everyday lives. Similarly, the canon will vary throughout time and space, be the "victim" of favorites and fashions, and the repository of all those forms which accomplish the terms after "for." The canon is always canons: one can imagine a collection of the greatest sob stories for fourteen-year-old white suburban girls, the most scary stories for nine-year-old Philadelphia cub scouts. But the text addresses its own audience and one could use the text itself as evidence in determining the conventional boundaries of reader populations.

It is by evaluative statements, not by cognitive statements alone, that we delimit the range of the text and constitute the canon. If we had a canonical category, "The Most Incomprehensible Works of Art," or "The Most Boring Works of Art," it would most likely be because we had found some special uses for incomprehensibility and boredom. And this isn't hard to imagine: the best incomprehensible text would keep someone from reading over your shoulder on a bus, the best boring text could be picked up each time you needed inspiration to read something else.

Much of what I have said in this essay points to evaluation as having a function of setting limits. By evaluation we determine the parameters of the symbolic universe, by evaluation we control the future and re-order the past. Evaluation *for* is a way to determine which activities will be meaningful, which will be endowed with significance. Value and evaluation will always have consequence for Values, for the maintenance of the symbolic universe. When fictions provide us with play, with a movement without hope of fixity, they offer a critique of evaluation as proverb, an evaluation which traces the codes of values-at-hand upon the code of Values. At the center of the proverb is belief in hierarchy, a conviction that one can move "up" to the case of all cases, to the proper rule. The proverb is the place where tradition and expectation close down on the flux of experience, on the riddles of cognition. In the space which the literature of play allows to be marked only with difference, the proverb chisels its univocal meaning. In this is the politics of the proverb, and the politics of any evaluation which cannot move back on itself.

Can we say that while we use art to shift the cognitive organization of the universe, we use evaluation to put things back into their proper places? Probably not, for although the range of terms we use in evaluating may remain more or less constant, may even present us with a cognitive map of the limits of artistic or textual possibilities, from age to age there are radical shifts in the parts of the range that are used. And the relationship between text and context cannot be assumed without dismantling the very concepts of language and representation which, proverb-like, loom behind it. A theory of value as a critique of value questions the presence of the object of evaluation, placing itself against the very movement of evaluation, the movement toward reification. Wittgenstein despaired of context, writing, "It is not only difficult to describe what appreciation consists in, but impossible. To describe what it consists in we would have to describe the whole environment."[24] But it is only by dismantling the whole environment, by playing evaluation against a context of the social-symbolic universe, in a game which by necessity we must frame as "fictive," that we can begin to dismantle the legislation of the world.

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[24] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, ed. Cyril Barrett (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 7.

S. CLARK HULSE[*]

Wresting the Alphabet: Oratory and Action in "Titus Andronicus"

Even among revenge tragedies *Titus Andronicus* is especially brutal. It has 14 killings, 9 of them on stage, 6 severed members, 1 rape (or 2 or 3, depending on how you count), 1 live burial, 1 case of insanity, and 1 of cannibalism—an average of 5.2 atrocities per act, or one for every 97 lines. While to its sheer license the play owes much of its power, this "aesthetic of mutilation" keeps *Titus* at a distance from *Hamlet*, with which it shares so many stage conventions. The action of one seems so starkly external, of the other so internal, that readers have been tempted to find in them a paradigm of false and true tragedy.

If one has nagging doubts about this view of *Titus*, they derive from the demonstrable success of the play on the stage. Dr. Johnson observed that "the barbarity of the spectacles, and the general massacre which are here exhibited, can scarcely be conceived tolerable to any audience; yet we are told by [Ben] *Jonson*, that they were not only borne but praised."[1] The fact is that the condemnation of *Titus* is advanced by the learned and the literary, so that its stage popularity merely becomes evidence of the drooling sadism of the London mob.[2] When performed by capable and imaginative modern companies, *Titus Andronicus* shows some of the power that kept it current on the Elizabethan stage for decades. Robert Speaight called Peter Brook's 1955 production "all in all, perhaps, the greatest Shakespearian production of our time, as Oliver's Titus was arguably his greatest performance—the most intense exhibition of sheer suffering that even this actor has given us."[3] The striking feature of this and other productions is their avoidance of blood; mere carnage cannot explain

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[1] *The Plays of William Shakespeare ... to which are added Notes by Sam. Johnson* (London, 1765), VI, 364.

[2] See especially T. S. Eliot's notorious remarks in "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation," in *Selected Essays, 1917-1932* (London: Faber and Faber, 1932), p. 82.

[3] *Shakespeare on the Stage* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), p. 251.

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the play's impact.[4] A second and stranger dimension that these productions add to our understanding of the play's effect is the fact that the audience often laughs through many of those tortures that so offend readers[5]—a distant echo perhaps of the amusement that Ben Jonson felt with the play in 1614.[6] Cruelty and suffering seem to have become as familiar and entertaining to Jacobean audiences as they are to modern ones. Any sensible assessment and interpretation of the play, then, must account for the seeming difference between the play as read and the play as seen.[7]

Examining the "play as seen" involves reconstructing a hypothetical Elizabethan production out of hints in the text as well as tracing the play's subsequent stage history. Yet these tell us only what physical things are seen, not how they are seen, how the visual elements of the play are taken to represent interior actions. The major evidence for interpreting the visual action of *Titus Andronicus*, as of any play, is its text; and the text of *Titus* examines in a coherent way the very distinction, between the exterior action of the player and the interior action of the learned reader, that seemed to make its case so hopeless. Opening with the pageantry of a Roman civil order erected on the foundation of public oratory, the action of the play moves in Acts I and II to a "wilderness of tigers" in which spoken language sickens and decays, leaving only the mute visual signs of wounds and gashes.

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[4] Speaight, p. 252. Modern productions are surveyed by G. Harold Metz in "The Stage History of *Titus Andronicus*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 28 (1977), 154-69.

[5] Metz, p. 165; Alan C. Dessen, *Elizabethan Drama and the Viewer's Eye* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1977), p. 159. Metz cites one theater reviewer who found that "it was all more entertaining than it has any right to be" (p. 168). Dessen calls laughter an "unwelcome response," but I shall argue that it has been an appropriate and necessary response to the play since 1600.

[6] *Bartholomew Fair*, ed. Eugene M. Waith (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), Induction, 95-99.

[7] Two recent studies are relevant here. In *Elizabethan Drama and the Viewer's Eye*, Alan Dessen discusses the pit in Act II as a visual image (pp. 158-62). In his article, "The Alphabet of Speechless Complaint: A Study of the Mangled Daughter in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*," in *The Triple Bond: Plays, Mainly Shakespearean, in Performance*, ed. Joseph G. Price (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 255-73, Rudolf Stamm analyzes the actors' gestures required by the text, concluding that the play offered Shakespeare training "in the art of expressing emotion and meaning . . . through gesture and the other visual elements of the theatre as well."

" Speak hands for me! " cried another of Shakespeare's Romans; but the Andronici are without words or hands, seemingly deprived of the capacity for verbal pathos in which Prince Hamlet abounds. In this failure of language, as Lawrence Danson has recently recognized, lies a paradoxic tragic power, for Titus must turn his acts and words outward toward the audience, to make of himself a visual spectacle, a " device of wonder." [8] Danson concludes that " we see Shakespeare's recognition and handling of the problem in the paradoxical ineffectuality of the play's rhetoric—paradoxical because, however stirring it may be to the audience, it is useless to the character in achieving, in his fictive world, the results he intends." [9] To advance on this analysis, we need a more complicated sense of the ending of the play, where Titus, through the fact of his linguistic failure, becomes one of drama's most effective revengers. As Titus learns to " wrest the alphabet " of his mangled daughter, he learns a new language of action that supplants the old Roman oratory, because it alone can simultaneously probe the inner wounds of the spirit, and inflict outer wounds on his enemies.

The movement of the play from civilization to wilderness begins as an orderly retreat through the outlands of crumbling visual symbols and empty social gestures.[10] Act I is organized scenically around the Senate House, represented by the area " aloft," and the tomb of the Andronici, probably represented by a stage property, for we know from Henslowe's diary that prop tombs were in use on the popular stage in 1598.[11] While the Senate House becomes a symbol of military prowess and civic order, Titus apostrophizes the tomb as a " Sweet cell of virtue and nobility," [12] so that the stage as a whole is an emblem of the Roman civic virtues that are about to be destroyed. The scenic effect is reinforced by the opening debate between Saturninus and Bassianus, which invokes the Ciceronian oratory so fundamental to Roman virtue. At the focus of this oratory is Titus himself, who is at first pleaded to, then pleaded for, and finally becomes himself a pleader. The centrality of pleading to both text and scene is reaffirmed by the Peacham sketch, the only surviving illustration of a Shakespeare play on the Elizabethan stage, which shows Tamora, hands clasped in prayer, kneeling to Titus to beg in vain for the life of her son. Particularly interesting is that Titus is shown in the sketch wearing the toga of a citizen, even though he has arrived straight from the wars. These and subsequent scenes in the act show the plea as an action performed with at least the appearance of reason, and heard with the semblance of rational judgment.

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[8] *Tragic Alphabet: Shakespeare's Drama of Language* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1974), pp. 1-21.

[9] Danson, p. 14.

[10] For an analysis of the play in terms of the fall and restoration of Rome and Romanness, see G. K. Hunter, " Shakespeare's Earliest Tragedies: 'Titus Andronicus' and 'Romeo and Juliet,' " *Shakespeare Survey*, 27 (1974), 1-9.

[11] *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1961), p. 319.

[12] I. i. 93. All citations of the plays are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, G. Blakemore Evans, gen. ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

At the opening of Act II, Aaron announces an abrupt scenic shift:

> The Emperor’s court is like the house of Fame,
> The palace full of tongues, of eyes, and ears;
> The woods are ruthless, dreadful, deaf, and dull.
> (II. i. 126-8)

While oratorical Rome has been set before us visually, the silent woods are, paradoxically, depicted through words and sounds. Two places alone are specified, a pit and a tree, represented, one may assume, by the trap and a stage post (though again Henslowe’s inventory of the Admiral’s Men mentions prop trees). To this bare staging is added a cacophony of woodland noises: the stage sounds of hounds and horns, and the chanting birds and hissing snakes with which Tamora plays a Gothic overture. The gap between the city and the forest is bridged by a continuity of action, as Lavinia pleads to Tamora to avert her rape; yet the action is inappropriate and futile in a setting dominated not by human artifacts and the human voice, but by animal sounds and images:

> *Lavinia.* ‘Tis true, the raven doth not hatch a lark,
> Yet have I heard—O, could I find it now!—
> The lion, mov’d with pity, did endure
> To have his princely paws par’d all away.
> Some say that ravens foster forlorn children
> The whilst their own birds famish in their nests;
> O, be to me, though thy hard heart say no,
> Nothing so kind, but something pitiful!
> *Tamora.* I know not what it means, away with her!
> (II. iii. 149-57)

Lavinia’s first line recognizes reality, but the string of proverbs that follows it runs down into a babble, with the opposite of its intended effect. It is the wrong argument, directed to the wrong audience.

In Act III, as the wilderness enters Rome, Titus himself becomes the pleader for his ensnared sons, but the force of words is lost in a mockery of legal oratory. Titus cries out in the streets as the judges and senators file past, falls on his face, and babbles to the blocks and stones. The setting for this and all the succeeding scenes in Act III and Act IV is no place in particular—on the road somewhere, from the forest or to the place of execution. Divorced from the fixed world of Roman institutions, the plea wanes into futility.

It was Titus himself who first smashed Rome's veneer of civic order when with "cruel irreligious piety" he sacrificed Tamora's son and refused to be won by her words. The mounting inadequacy of rhetoric in the face of violence culminates at the end of Act II when Lavinia appears, "her hands cut off, and her tongue cut out, and ravish'd." The response of her uncle Marcus to the sight is a formalized declaration:

> Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,
> Like to a bubbling fountain stirr'd with wind,
> Doth rise and fall between thy rosed lips,
> Coming and going with thy honey breath.
> But sure some Tereus hath deflow'red thee,
> And lest thou shouldst detect [him], cut thy tongue.
> Ah, now thou turn'st away thy face for shame!
> And notwithstanding all this loss of blood,
> As from a conduit with [three] issuing spouts,
> Yet do thy cheeks look red as Titan's face
> Blushing to be encount'red with a cloud.
> (II. iv. 22-32)

Marcus might be describing a broken water main, not his niece, for all the emotional weight or interior reference his words seem to carry. In the peculiar and seemingly undramatic language of the passage, the horror of the moment is made familiar and comprehensible by the images of cloud, fountain, and conduit, only to have this poetic transformation frustrated by the physical presence of the actor gushing blood.[13] The irrefutable reality of the stage action seems to block the transforming power of poetry—or is it that the unemotional language of Marcus frustrates the visual development of an empathic response? In either case, the presumed gulf between language and action disappears if we allow that the change in the language of the play is met by a corresponding change in the action. The classical oratory of Act I has given way to a new formal rhetoric, in which physical appearance is given symbolic vestments. While language, the vehicle of the soul, at this point lies useless to the characters of the play, the motions of the body become the tool for expressing the inner person.

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[13] Eugene Waith, "The Metamorphosis of Violence in *Titus Andronicus*," *Shakespeare Survey*, 10 (1957), 39-49. For another response to Waith, see Albert H. Tricomi, "The Aesthetics of Mutilation in 'Titus Andronicus,'" *Shakespeare Survey*, 27 (1974), 11-19.

In the new language that Marcus has used, the parts of the body are repeatedly named and allegorized.[14] At the beginning of Act II, the pit that will hold Bassianus, Martius and Quintus becomes a satanic womb.[15] At the end of Act II, in the infamous "bubbling fountain" speech, hands, once instruments of valor or of the soft arts of music and embroidery, are transformed into emblems of woe:

> *Marcus.* A craftier Tereus, cousin, hast thou met,
> And he hath cut those pretty fingers off
> That could have better sew'd than Philomel.
> O, had the monster seen those lily hands
> Tremble like aspen leaves upon a lute,
> And make the silken strings delight to kiss them,
> He would not then have touch'd them for his life!
> (II. iv. 41-7)

While this is as "rhetorical" as the verse of Act I, there is nothing here of the objective, public, moral emblems of Senate House and tomb. These are subjective emblems of human passion. Lavinia is presented as a *tableau vivant*, her mutilation recast in formal and mythological terms, so that the attendant horror and sorrow appear as fixed qualities of the physical objects, hands, rather than as transient motions of the soul.

When Titus first sees his mangled daughter, he commands her to speak. When she cannot, he resorts to the language of formalized woe to express their mutual grief:

> Shall thy good uncle, and thy brother Lucius,
> And thou, and I, sit round about some fountain,

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[14] Muriel Bradbrook calls this process "moral heraldry" in *Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951), pp. 104-10.

[15] The parallel between this image and *King Lear*, IV. vi. 126-30, is noted by Tricomi, p. 18. See also his article, "The Mutilated Garden in *Titus Andronicus*," in *Shakespeare Studies*, 9 (1976), 89-105.

> Looking all downwards to behold our cheeks,
> How they are stain'd like meadows yet not dry,
> With miry slime left on them by a flood?
> And in the fountain shall we gaze so long
> Till the fresh taste be taken from that clearness,
> And made a brine-pit with our bitter tears?
> Or shall we cut away our hands like thine?
> Or shall we bite our tongues, and in dumb shows
> Pass the remainder of our hateful days?
> What shall we do? Let us that have our tongues
> Plot some device of further misery,
> To make us wonder'd at in time to come.
> (III. i. 122-35)

Titus's *tableau vivant* is a paradigm of the whole action of the play. In the water's mirror the Andronici contemplate themselves—not an introspection, but an externalizing of their state: the self projected onto the fountain, which weeps in sympathy; transformed into theatrical action; then to vengeful action; and finally elevated to marvel and myth.

The first result of this elevation is that the Andronici identify themselves with the external world:

> *Titus.* I am the sea; hark how her sighs doth [blow]!
> She is the weeping welkin, I the earth:
> Then must my sea be moved with her sighs;
> Then must my earth with her continual tears
> Become a deluge, overflow'd and drown'd.
> (III. i. 225-9)

This is, in a sense, merely the pathetic fallacy, or an invocation of the old correspondence of microcosm and macrocosm. But the fact that something is a literary convention does not mean that it is unremarkable or even "normal" psychologically. The pathetic fallacy is pointedly used here as a sign of rising passion, of personality disturbance and obsession. Madness, indeed, is so rampant that when the heads of his nephews arrive, even Marcus, that counselor of reason, can sound like Lear on the heath:

> Now let hot Aetna cool in Sicily,
> And be my heart an ever-burning hell!
> (III. i. 241-2)

Throughout his career, Shakespeare grappled with the problem of representing dramatically extreme states of private emotion; prelude to Hamlet's cry that "I have that within which passes show" (I. ii. 85) is Richard II's lament:

> ... my grief lies all within,
> And these external [manners] of laments
> Are merely shadows to the unseen grief
> That swells with silence in the tortur'd soul.
> (IV. i. 295-8)

Though its inspiration is Senecan, *Titus* belongs to that moment of dramatic experiment in the late 1580's and early 1590's before classical staging had quite conquered the morality and interlude. It calls on a dramatic medium in which Shakespeare can create a stage space both personal and emblematic, stripped of precise geographical identity and capable of breaking down entirely the barriers between the inner and outer worlds. While Shakespeare has gone in Acts I and V of *Titus* a long way toward the "real" space of the later stage, he still retains the option of mingling localized and unlocalized scenes. Indeed, in the plays written for the Globe between 1599 and 1609, fully 60% of the scenes still employ a space that is only generally localized.[16] This is the basic mode of Acts II-IV of *Titus*, all of which occur either in the forest or in Rome, but with precise locales undefined, and the settings developed primarily as embodiments of emotion, scenic analogues to the rhetoric of woe. The mad Titus, obsessed with his suffering and his revenge, looks at every object around him for the reflection of his personal state. The rhetoric of Acts II and III has mythologized those objects of the external world, so that whenever Titus moves a hand, he is able not just to represent, but to see his suffering. As Titus goes mad, the world of the play becomes the world of his insanity.

The climax of the play, then, comes in a series of scenes in Act III in which Titus completes his movement from the inner reference of speech to the outer reference of signs. Presented with the heads of his sons, he falls still, as tongueless as his daughter. At the beginning of the play, he carried the epithet "Pius," like Rome's Trojan founder. Now he refuses the role, lest like Aeneas at Carthage he be bid to "tell the tale twice o'er/How Troy was burnt and he made miserable"

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[16] Bernard Beckerman, *Shakespeare at the Globe, 1599-1609* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), p. 66.

(III. ii. 27-8). At the same moment, his silent daughter becomes to him eloquent:

> *Titus.* Speechless [complainant], I will learn thy thought;
> In thy dumb action will I be as perfect
> As begging hermits in their holy prayers.
> Thou shalt not sigh, nor hold thy stumps to heaven,
> Nor wink, nor nod, nor kneel, nor make a sign,
> But I, of these, will wrest an alphabet,
> And by still practice learn to know thy meaning.
> (III. ii. 39-45)

Titus lectures Marcus on the proper theatrical gestures to express outwardly their passion—folding the arms, standing and sitting, beating the breast. In the fly-killing scene, they debate the meaning of this new visual code: " thou kill'st my heart! " says Titus, identifying the fly with himself, until Marcus reminds him that the fly was black, and so better glossed as Aaron the Moor. So too, young Lucius tells us aside that Demetrius and Chiron are " decipher'd," although they cannot in turn decipher Titus' meaning.

It is no coincidence that both *Hamlet* and *Titus* reach their climaxes in acts built around dramas-within-dramas. The Mousetrap of Act III of *Hamlet*, showing a nephew killing his uncle, is both a recollection of the crime of Claudius and an announcement of Hamlet's own coming vengeance. The *tableaux vivants* of Act III of *Titus* formalize the horror of the plot, metamorphizing the Andronici into characters of " dumb shows," " devices," and wonders. They are narcissi, simultaneously actors and audience, practicing a sadistic voyeurism as they contemplate the sexual violence inflicted on them and which they shall inflict on others. It is this sadistic voyeurism, so central to the meaning of the play, that has made more than one audience or reader uneasy about his own response to the play. *Hamlet* isolates at a different level of dramatic reality the reflective moment in which real crimes are presented as entertainment. *Titus* rams the levels together, and the inner world of madness and obsession breaks all hold on the world of peace and order for characters and audience alike.

Once the barriers are down, the interior grief of the Andronici is no longer distinguishable from the exterior action of their revenge. Titus tells the suffering Lavinia to

> . . . get some little knife between thy teeth,
> And just against thy heart make thou a hole,

> That all the tears that thy poor eyes let fall
> May run into that sink, and soaking in,
> Drown the lamenting fool in sea-salt tears.
> (III. ii. 16-20)

Literally, this is suicide, but in this new realm, the advice foreshadows the final revenge, where a knife indeed brings an end to her torment. So in Act IV, the mad Titus shoots messages tied to arrows to the silent gods, but Marcus more wisely directs the arrows not at the heavens, but at the court, to make them into offensive weapons.

While the plot of a revenge tragedy is conventionally reflexive, one group of plotters initiating a situation exploited by the other,[17] the action of *Titus* is doubly reflexive: the inventions of Tamora fall on her own head as she, Demetrius, and Chiron appear as Revenge, Murder, and Rape:

> *Titus.* Look round about the wicked streets of Rome,
> And when thou find'st a man that's like thyself,
> Good Murther, stab him, he's a murtherer.
> Go thou with him, and when it is thy hap
> To find another that is like to thee,
> Good Rapine, stab him, he is a ravisher.
> Go thou with them, and in the Emperor's court
> There is a queen, attended by a Moor;
> Well shalt thou know her by thine own proportion,
> For up and down she doth resemble thee.
> I pray thee do on them some violent death.
> (V. ii. 98-108)

In their obsession with crime, Tamora and her sons have put on disguises that both reveal their inner natures and inflict punishment on them. By partaking in the Andronican rhetoric of *tableaux vivants*, they have provided their enemy the means of turning his rhetoric of helpless woe into a rhetoric of vengeful action. Titus tells us soberly that he is not mad, and so can exploit their tactical error, but Titus's behavior is normal only in that he can perceive clearly and act effectively in a city where Revenge, Murder, and Rape stroll about the streets. He has at the height of his madness asked, "Then which way shall I find Revenge's cave?" (III. i. 270). Now Revenge matter-of-factly knocks at the door of his study.

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[17] Fredson Bowers, *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587-1642* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1940), pp. 110-8.

With that knocking, the play returns to a localized setting, for we stand at the door to Titus's own house. While the localized setting of Act I worked as an emblem of the public and moral virtues of Rome, the study of Titus completes the objectification of private emotions. In the Globe plays, the enclosure commonly served as the "study,"[18] but Tamora's line, "therefore come down and welcome me" (V. ii. 43) suggests that Titus first appears above, and, in the course of an eleven-line soliloquy by Tamora (V. ii. 70-80), descends and enters through a stage door that represents the entrance to the study. Titus has himself already punned on the word, asking Tamora:

> Is it your trick to make me ope the door
> That so my decrees may fly away,
> And all my study be to no effect?
> (V. ii. 10-12)

His study (the building) is his study (the object of his contemplation—his grief and revenge), just as his house is called "my woeful house" (V. ii. 82) and "old Titus' sorrowful house" (V. iii. 142). Titus's house is the spatial extension of himself, his *sedes* or *mansion*, as surely as in a morality play.

Dressed up in his cook's outfit, Titus performs the final murders there in a mood of gleeful playacting, delighting in his role at last. As they commit their mass murder, Titus and Lavinia simultaneously tell o'er their woes and avenge them, recounting their suffering not in words, but in visual images. Lavinia took a staff in her mouth when she named the rapists, enacting fellatio, or, if we take seriously the pun that Act II made on hell-mouth, re-enacting her own violation.[19] Titus now slits the throats of Demetrius and Chiron while their blood spills into Lavinia's basin, a second visual recapitulation both of her rape, and of the death of Titus' sons. Finally, Tamora devours the pasties in which their heads are baked, returning the fiends to her womb, and reversing the birth of her black son in Act IV. Titus then has only to slay both Lavinia and Tamora, the pitiful and the pitiless, to signify the depth of his grief and to complete the action of the play.

With the final ritual of slaughter, the conflict that has pushed the Andronici beyond the limits of normal action is removed. The sacrifice of Titus restores Roman order, and with it restores the ordinary function of language. Lucius, his heir, can mount the rostrum like a classical orator to address his eager audience:

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[18] Beckerman, p. 194.

[19] This visual presentation of a symbolic parallel between crime and retribution appears also in Lightborn's execution of Edward II in Marlowe's play, approximately contemporary with *Titus*.

> *Marcus.* Speak, Rome's dear friend, as erst our ancestor,
> When with his solemn tongue he did discourse
> To love-sick Dido's sad attending ear
> The story of that baleful burning night,
> When subtile Greeks surpris'd King Priam's Troy.
> (V. iii. 80-84)

If Lucius is now like Aeneas, he can win tears from his listeners with his oratory, as Titus could not. And if Lucius is the new Aeneas, then Titus becomes a younger Priam, and has melted wholly into the stuff of a legendary past.

The formal language of the middle acts of *Titus Andronicus* seems undramatic only if we cling to a naturalistic sense of dramatic action; its very formality is part of its theatrical impact, moving us toward a visual enactment of inner sorrow, and forcing the protagonist into action against his enemies. Hamlet at first opposed the mere acting or outward show of grief to the action that springs from true grief. He found himself finally able to take action, though, through acting, by feigning madness and by producing a play. Similarly, Titus finds oratory to fail where only revenge will do, but can strike back only in a complaint uttered in the alphabet of signs. Still, if the language of *Titus* is in this sense dramatic, it forces on the play a peculiar aesthetic mood, mingling the tragic and the absurd, in which only a few works have been able to succeed. This is nonetheless a common mood in the revival of the revenge tragedy in 1600. Marston's *Antonio and Mellida* and *Antonio's Revenge* are, if R. A. Foakes is right, meant to sound ludicrous in the mouths of the boy actors for whom they are written.[20] *Hamlet*, the greatest of the type, has madcap murder, death in disguise, and torturous play-acting. All call on a psychological truth about the human ability to comprehend suffering—at a certain point, the only way to cope with pain is to laugh.

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[20] R. A. Foakes, "John Marston's Fantastical Plays: *Antonio and Mellida* and *Antonio's Revenge*," *Philological Quarterly*, 41 (1962), 229-39. Foakes is seconded by G. K. Hunter in his edition of *Antonio and Mellida* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. xv-xvii, and by Michael Shapiro in *Children of the Revels: The Boy Companies of Shakespeare's Time and Their Plays* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 131-7. For a dissenting view, see Ejner J. Jensen, "The Style of the Boy Actors," *Comparative Drama*, 2 (1968), 100-14.

Still, the occasional absurdity of *Titus* is an inadvertant result of a necessarily rhetorical style, not a conscious calculation as in Marston's plays or in *Hamlet*. *Titus* achieves its success by an unlikely marriage of Latinate rhetoric and early English theater conditions, in which the rhetoric transforms the stage, props and actors in symbolic *tableaux*, and the staging gives theatrical significance to the poet's rhetoric. Yet ten or fifteen years later, these very elements seemed comically incompatible, and have remained so. While *Hamlet* looks askance at Marston's boy actors, it joins in the parody of the old Senecan fustian and stiff action with "The Murder of Gonzago." As a first experiment with the shifting levels of dramatic action, and their capacity to portray the depravity of human action, *Titus* is a worthy predecessor to *Hamlet*. But, as Shakespeare and Ben Jonson alike remind us, the strict formality that brings that success had begun, within a generation, to ring strangely on the ears of its audience.

ANTHONY KAUFMAN*

Idealization, Disillusion, and Narcissistic Rage in Wycherley's "The Plain Dealer"

The reputation of William Wycherley rests entirely on two brilliant dramas: *The Country Wife* and *The Plain Dealer.* But while *The Country Wife*, whatever its dramatic complexity, is undoubtedly clear in its thematic mainlines, the design of *The Plain Dealer* is enigmatic, absorbing, and perhaps perennially elusive. Indeed the original audience was puzzled and uneasy about how to respond to this singular play, and the sense of unease experienced by the original audience about the play's intentions lingers today. While few critics have totally ignored the undoubted dramatic power of *The Plain Dealer*, there has been considerable disagreement about the success of the play as a whole and its rank in the canon of English drama. Recent criticism has attempted to define more clearly the puzzling figure of Captain Manly, who is obviously the key to the play's meaning. Manly has been seen as Wycherley's alter ego—a plain speaking truewit reduced to near misanthropy by a corrupt world—and at the opposite extreme as a "madman," prideful and self-deceiving. Yet there is a crucial feature of Manly that has not been fully explored: his anger, its causes, and its devastating effects. I wish to suggest here that Wycherley is presenting a complex and dramatically powerful study of an exceptional man disbarred by his own anger and contempt for the world from experiencing friendship and love. Wycherley dramatizes with fascinating clarity the psychology of Manly's anger, and in a conclusion often misunderstood—indeed often dismissed as dramatically unacceptable—the catharsis of anger in the recognition of truth, loyalty, and love.

When we follow Captain Manly from the opening scene to his discovery of Fidelia as a young (and rich) girl in Act V, we are, I believe, left with one dominant impression: that of his anger. At the opening of the play, he has withdrawn to his lodging and set two of his sailors guard to keep out intruders. When Lord Plausible sneaks past the guard and gains entry, Manly, exasperated by his

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complaisant visitor, rages at him as an example of the corrupt way of the world, as one of those who will "tug on in a faction, kissing my leader behind, that another slave may do the like to me" (I. 10-11).[1] This first and obviously crucial scene ends with Manly "*thrusting out my* Lord Plausible," the first violent act of several Manly performs during the play.

Critics have noted the alteration of Wycherley's source, *Le Misanthrope*, in this opening scene. In Molière, Alceste appears with Philinte in the first scene, and their debate on the necessity of sincerity as opposed to that of amiable social intercourse based on polite fictions provides a balanced estimate of their positions—one view qualifies the other, and neither position is entirely satisfactory. But in *The Plain Dealer*, Wycherley opens with a scene in which Manly's anger and contempt are justified. Plausible embodies a rotten world, and our sympathy and sense of moral rectitude are with Captain Manly. This sense of admiration for Manly, though severely tried, is never entirely lost during the play. As critics have observed, the fact that Manly is a sea-captain suggests that he is an "outsider," a man of integrity and self-reliance, capable of assessing accurately the corrupt society he wishes to leave.

Wycherley, quite early in the play, has provided a key image which defines the societal corruption he indicts and Manly's relation to it. In Act I, Manly forcefully denies Freeman's suggestion that one must laughingly and with detachment comply with the way of the world. Manly's reply is scathing and memorable:

> Freeman: Observe but any morning what people do when they get together on the Exchange, in Westminster Hall, or the galleries in Whitehall.
>
> Manly: I must confess, there they seem to rehearse Bays's grand dance: here you see a bishop bowing low to a gaudy atheist, a judge to a doorkeeper, a great lord to a fishmonger or a scrivener with a jack-chain about his neck, a lawyer to a sergeant at arms, a velvet physician to a threadbare chemist, and a supple gentleman usher to a surly beefeater, and so tread 'round in a preposterous huddle of ceremony to each other, whilst they can hardly hold their solemn false countenances. (I. 296-307)

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[1] *The Plain Dealer*, ed. Leo Hughes (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1967). All quotations are from this edition.

The allusion to Bays's grand dance refers to the ludicrous dance presented by the dunce-dramatist Mr. Bays in *The Rehearsal* (1671). Manly's language describes his sense of ritualized, indeed ceremonial pretence, calculated and self-conscious deceit, and societal disorder—a society where social degree and individual worth are blurred. Manly's contempt for this debasement is seen also in his continual use in this first scene of images of degradation: men and women are spaniels, fools, knaves, slaves, whores, pickpockets, coxcombs, sycophants, cowards, and rascals.

After Manly's ejection of Lord Plausible, the stage is left to the two sailors whose comments are choric. They contrast Plausible and his kind to the honorable Manly whose own fortune went down with his ship. But although the two sailors confirm their captain's estimate of this society, they also point to a disturbing flaw in Manly; his courage and honor express themselves in his Hotspur-like love of fighting: "'Tis true, I never saw him pleased but in the fight.... A pox, he's like the Bay of Biscay, rough and angry, let the wind blow where 'twill" (I. 128; 131-32). And one recalls that once, after they had with peril rescued Manly, "when I welcomed him ashore, he gave me a box on the ear and called me fawning water dog" (I. 137-38).

Indeed, Manly's anger, however justifiable, is portrayed throughout Act I as excessive. Not merely the blunt honest anger of the outraged plain dealer, his anger reveals disdain for ordinary human relationships. Manly's treatment of Freeman and Fidelia, who have served him well at sea, is pointedly abusive, and Freeman, whatever his own moral status within the play, tells Manly that his anger has become remarkable: "I should tell you that the world thinks you a madman, a brutal" (I. 276-77). The suggestion of excess in the first act prepares for Manly's explosive anger against Olivia in Act II as he learns of her treachery. Though the anger is perhaps justified, Wycherley has made the scene (II. 481-769) unusually long, and it ends with Manly's bitter exclamation: "Hell and the devil reward thee." In Acts III, IV, and V, moreover, Manly's anger becomes in the opinion of a number of critics so extreme as to confuse the dramatic design of the play. Manly plans and executes an unpleasant revenge against Olivia and it is to a great extent this excessive and disturbing revenge that leads Rose Zimbardo and Anne Righter quite rightly to stress Manly's anger.[2] Righter calls him "an agent of destruction" (p. 86), and surely there is an intense anger evident in Manly until the final scene of the play in which the proper discoveries are made and Manly's fury is at last dissipated.

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[2] Rose Zimbardo, *Wycherley's Drama: A Link in the Development of English Satire* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 83-89, and Anne Righter, "William Wycherley," in *Restoration Theatre*, eds. John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris (1965; rpt. New York: Capricorn Books, 1967), pp. 81-86.

The question of Manly's anger has been troublesome to critics and there has been confusion as to its dramatic significance. But if we analyse this element of the play more closely than in the past, we may come to a more comprehensive and satisfying account of what I believe to be Wycherley's dramatic design. What did this playwright, noted by his contemporaries as a master of human psychology, intend in the figure of Manly?

We have seen from the beginning of the play that Manly is consumed by anger as the result of his sense of human baseness, but balancing this anger is his curious, indeed remarkable, insistence that a man "can have but one friend, for a true heart admits but of one friendship as of one love" (I. 204-05). Manly is portrayed as a character whose feelings of anger and resultant sense of isolation have led him to create for himself a protective illusion: that at least two people, Olivia and Vernish (the "one love" and "one friend") are exempt from Bays's grand dance and are capable of loyalty, friendship, and love. This illusion may be understood as the psychological phenomenon "idealization," the function of which, as Charles Rycroft points out, is "to enable the ego to deny feelings of hopelessness and emptiness," which arise from a withdrawal of psychic energy from the actual world, and to evade the necessity of recognizing and resolving the ambivalence which would have to be resolved if one were to face the actual world in a healthy and productive way.[3] Manly's idealization of Vernish and Olivia, his best and only friend, and his mistress, is of course disastrous; he is the victim of their machinations. But Manly, who sees clearly the nature of his world, whose comments on his world are perceptive and seldom wrong—is he merely deceived by Olivia and Vernish, as some critics have thought? Or is it not more likely that he *wills* to believe in the possibility that two people are exempt from social and moral degradation. In a society in which he can find no trust, where love is inevitably tainted, and friendship only self-interest, Manly arbitrarily fixes his value on Olivia and Vernish, love and friendship. Manly's illusion is psychologically sustaining, a means to evade a painful psychological situation; it also reveals a desire to simplify life and to avoid the necessity of complex discrimination. He has withdrawn from life, from feelings other than contempt and anger—but he compulsively elects to trust and to love two people.

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[3] "On Idealization, Illusion, and Catastrophic Disillusion," in *Imagination and Reality: Psycho-Analytical Essays 1951-1961* (London: Hogarth Press, 1968), p. 35. Rycroft speaks of the "fear of the external object resulting from projection on to it of endogenous destructive impulses," as a reason for the withdrawal of psychic energies from real, external objects (p. 35).

Manly's need for idealization is related to what I believe central to his psychological make-up; Wycherley has portrayed his misanthrope as unhealthily narcissistic. And this narcissism leads to the anger which is evident in Manly up to the concluding scene. Although precise definition of the narcissistic personality and its symptoms is difficult, it is generally agreed that the narcissist typically seeks himself as a love-object. Freud's suggestion that males of the narcissistic type are typically subject to overestimation of the female is provocative; furthermore Freud maintains that the narcissistic personality will characteristically desire to *be* loved in his choice of a woman.[4] That the search for the self in another, the overestimation, and the desire to be loved, are seen in Manly's choice of Olivia seems clear. Although Manly idealizes Vernish as well as Olivia and becomes disillusioned with him at the play's end, Vernish remains a rather undeveloped character. Manly's relationship with Olivia, however, is crucial, and Wycherley develops it at length. Olivia is apparently a notorious woman (see, for example, Eliza's telling remarks, V. i. 4ff). Indeed, Bonamy Dobrée suggests that Novel and Plausible are her lovers.[5] Yet Manly idealizes her, the very essence of what he detests in society. Olivia well understands the need of Manly and of her other suitors to see themselves in her, and her ability to reflect her suitors' idealized sense of themselves is expressed in a revealing image: "she stands in the drawing room like the glass, ready for all comers to set their gallantry by her, and, like the glass too, lets no man go from her unsatisfied" (IV. ii. 98-100). That men desire to see in Olivia their own image perfectly reveals the mythical roots of psychological narcissism.

Thus Manly's feelings for Olivia stem from his need to idealize her in order to avoid feelings of radical isolation and from his need to see, narcissistically, a reflection of himself in her and to *be* loved.[6] If this analysis is accepted, that scene (II. 481-769) in which he learns of Olivia's true feelings toward him and then feels intense rage is better understood. As Manly overhears Olivia's mockery and realizes that she despises him, pretending love only to secure his fortune, the illusion he has created is shattered and the psychological benefits of idealization are no longer available. The result must be the onslaught of the very fears that idealization helped to prevent: a sense of radical isolation and loneliness, feelings of being within an anarchical environment. He is faced with a reality which idealization has helped him to simplify and which is now seen to be complex. In short, Manly feels the proximity of feelings of despair and futility.[7] We must note, moreover, that the scene with Olivia is a highly public scene: Freeman and Fidelia, Manly's followers, are present to witness his humiliation, as are those fops he despises, Novel and Plausible. Such humiliation is unendurable to one who like Manly possesses narcissistic tendencies, and, as Heinz Kohut points out, such types may be subject to "narcissistic rage," an intense anger and the desire to gain revenge on the one who has inflicted the humiliation. Furthermore, the desire for revenge is "limitless":

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[4] "On Narcissism: An Introduction," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), XIV, 88.

[5] *Restoration Comedy 1660-1720* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1924), p. 89.

[6] In *The Analysis of the Self* (New York: International Universities Press, 1971), Heinz Kohut provides insight into the genesis of Manly's relationship with

> In its typical forms there is utter disregard for reasonable limitations and a boundless wish to redress an injury and to obtain revenge.... The narcissistically injured ... cannot rest until he has blotted out a vaguely experienced offender who dared to oppose him.[8]

Olivia when he points out that if in his/her development, the child suffers a traumatic and unsatisfactory loss of the idealized parent imago, "the child does not acquire the needed internal structure ... and the personality will throughout life be dependent on certain objects in what seems to be an intense form of object hunger." Those sought out to satisfy this object hunger "are not objects (in the psychological sense of the term) since they are not loved or admired for their attributes, and the actual features of their personalities, and their actions, are only dimly recognized. They are not longed for but are needed in order to replace the functions of a segment of the mental apparatus which had not been established in childhood" (pp. 45-46).

[7] Rycroft (p. 31) notes that idealization is "maintained as a defence against a sense of despair and futility," and Otto Kernberg, *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1975), points out that one function of idealization is "protection against aggression, and as a direct gratification of narcissistic needs" (p. 30). Moreover, idealization is one of several operations which protects the individual from "intensive ambivalence and a feared contamination and deterioration of all love relationships by hatred" (pp. 178-79).

[8] Heinz Kohut, "Thoughts on Narcissism and Narcissistic Rage," in *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 27 (1972), 382, 385. Otto Kernberg describes

Narcissistic types, such as Manly, must feel an absolute control over their selves and the world, and they insist on the perfection of the idealized self and on the limitlessness of their knowledge and power (Kohut, "Narcissistic Rage," p. 385). Psychologically, the very existence of Olivia is an offense, a reflection of an anarchical environment. To quote Kohut once more:

> ...although everybody tends to react to narcissistic injuries with embarrassment and anger, the most intense experiences of shame and the most violent forms of narcissistic rage arise in those individuals for whom a sense of absolute control over an archaic environment is indispensable because the maintenance of self-esteem—and indeed of the self—depends on the unconditional availability of the approving-mirroring functions of an admiring self-object.... those who are in the grip of narcissistic rage show total lack of empathy toward the offender. It explains the unmodifiable wish to blot out the offense which was perpetrated against the grandiose self and the unforgiving fury which arises when the control over the mirroring self-object is lost. (Kohut, "Narcissistic Rage," p. 386)

Manly must turn a passive experience, humiliation, into an active one: revenge.

I believe that such psychoanalytic conceptions of narcissistic rage explain most fully and clearly the source of Manly's limitless rage at Olivia, an anger that in intensity of feeling goes beyond the anger of a prideful man merely duped by a clever trickster. Critics have been puzzled and indeed even irritated with Manly's intense anger at Olivia and his plans for an admittedly unpleasant revenge. But rather than cry out upon Manly as a brute, or resort to speculations about the Restoration's sense of humor, it is better, I think, to under-

that narcissistic personality who identifies with some "outstanding" person and "If the person rejects them, they experience immediate hatred and fear, and react by devaluating the former idol.... they immediately drop him. In short, there is no real involvement with the admired person and a simple narcissistic use is made of him" (p. 236). Manly's psychological situation may be better understood via Kernberg's observation that a "frequent problem, particularly of narcissistic men in their relations with women, is the presence of intense, paranoid fears of sexual involvement, derived from their unconscious projection of their own hostility (toward primitive mother images) onto the women with whom they get involved" (p. 336).

stand Manly's psychological situation—one that the playwright has taken pains to define. It is important for us to understand that Manly is portrayed as a man whose essential, vulnerable self has been intolerably wounded and whose need is for revenge—a revenge which cannot acknowledge Olivia's selfhood, her humanity, but must blot out totally what has happened. Manly's feelings are revealingly expressed as he storms out of Olivia's salon: "I'll avoid the whole damned sex forever and woman as a sinking ship" (II. 785-86). That he is accompanied by Fidelia is, however, an ironic and positive foreshadowing of the fact that his development is not yet complete.

The feelings of idealization, so necessary to him, have been shaken, but for him to acknowledge this immediately is impossible; the psychological consequences of such realization are too painful. When Manly next speaks directly of his feelings for Olivia, we realize the confusion of emotions he retains for her. In Act III, set in Westminister Hall, he speaks in soliloquy (for the only time in the play) of his desire to keep his feelings for her from being detected, especially by Freeman:

> I thought it once a kind of knavery,
> Nay, cowardice, to hide one's faults; but now
> The common frailty, love, becomes my shame.
> He must not know I love th' ungrateful still. . . . (III. 30-33)

He feels at this point confusion: disillusionment, lust, hatred. "Love," the only word he can use to describe his feelings for Olivia, undermines his sense of manhood; it forces one, he believes, into hypocrisy, knavery, cowardice—it makes one effeminate, the very antithesis of what Manly wishes to feel.

Manly's desire, painfully admitted to himself, is to make some overture to Olivia. He employs Fidelia, a girl disguised as a boy, who out of love for him has served as his "volunteer," to intercede on his behalf with Olivia. But Olivia, in a situation which recalls *Twelfth Night*, makes advances to Fidelia. Manly's confused hopes end with Fidelia's return. She is half-reluctant to inform Manly of what has happened; he is eager to learn whether Fidelia has "mollified [Olivia's] heart for me" (IV. i. 5). In a comic-poignant exchange, Fidelia tells Manly of Olivia's verbal abuse and perverse sexual advances. On the verge of frenzy, his incoherence a measure of the intensity of his feelings, Manly expresses the emotional confusion central to his relationship with Olivia: his lust, his need to think her true and honest, his sense of her enduring attraction, his hatred, his sense of his loss of self, his sense that love has made him cowardly, even his jealousy of Fidelia. It is a moment not easily duplicated in Restoration drama:

> Manly: Damned, damned woman, that could be so false and infamous! And damned, damned heart of mine, that cannot yet be false, though so infamous! What easy, tame, suffering, trampled things does that little god of talking cowards make of us! But—
>
> Fidelia: (*aside*) So! It works I find as I expected.
>
> Manly: But she was false to me before. She told me so herself, and yet I could not quite believe it. But she was, so that her second falseness is a favor to me, not an injury, in revenging me upon the man that wronged me first of her love. Her love!—a whore's, a witch's love!—But, what, did she not kiss well, sir? I'm sure I thought her lips—but I must not think of them more—but yet they are such I could still kiss—grow to—and then tear off with my teeth, grind them into mammocks and spit them into her cuckold's face. (IV. i. 104-118)

I have no wish to exaggerate claims for this play, but in this scene's portrayal of an intelligent, powerful, yet vulnerable man's sense of betrayal and universal corruption, may we not think of Hamlet's response to the ghost's " So lust, though to a radiant angel linked,/Will sate itself in a celestial bed/And prey on garbage." Both Manly and Hamlet view the world as a disordered garden, and both have a strong sense of the disparity between what men and women appear to be and the all-embracing corruption beneath. They are especially obsessed by the possibility that a woman's beauty may conceal hyper-sexuality and perversion. Both at times are bitter (and witty) satirists, and both seek revenge for a woman's perverse faithlessness.

Upon learning of Olivia's vicious and lustful behavior, Manly begins to form the specific idea of a " revenge " that he will have on Olivia: Fidelia will keep an assignation arranged by Olivia, and Manly will secretly enter Olivia's rooms to take Fidelia's place in bed. Manly has Olivia sexually and yet, angrily, he decides on an even more unpleasant " revenge "—he repeats the assignation the following night, this time inviting witnesses to surprise Olivia and thus publish her infamy. This scene (V. iii) presents a striking visual image of figures groping violently in the dark amidst murderous swordplay and confused, intense emotions.

> *The door broken open, enter* Vernish *alone with a dark lantern and a sword running at* Manly, *who draws, puts by the thrust, and defends himself, whilst* Fidelia *runs at* Vernish *behind.* (V. iii. s.d. following line 59)

When Manly disarms Vernish and discovers his supposed friend is actually Olivia's husband and confederate, the last of Manly's illusions are finally lifted, and it remains only for him to deliver a parting insult. Contemptuously he offers to pay Olivia as he would a whore: "Here, madam, I never yet left my wench unpaid" (IV. iii. 125).

Wycherley has given us in Manly a study of anger and its causes. Yet Manly is not alone in his anger. We find in *The Plain Dealer* three important characters who in quite different ways mirror the anger that Manly feels. Olivia has played on Manly's psychological vulnerability, but it is not enough to insist that she wishes to deceive him in order to gain wealth (though that is quite true). We must see that her hatred of him is radical and centers on his very essence: his masculinity. Her hatred is revealed, in Act II, in her comments to the fop, Novel, who has informed her of Manly's return to London:

> I heard of his fighting only, without particulars, and confess I always loved his brutal courage because it made me hope it might rid me of his more brutal love. (II. 505-507)

True, Olivia is playing her ongoing game of malicious wit with her dupe, Novel, but her wit here and elsewhere reveals intense feelings of hatred and repugnance for the maleness embodied by Manly. In short, Olivia loathes the "good Captain Swagger-huff," with his "boisterous sea love." Olivia is no Desdemona thrilling to the exotic adventures of the virile and marvelous Moor, nor even a Célimène, fascinated by the "bear of merit" (the phrase is Wyndham Lewis's), Alceste.

Throughout the play she announces her "aversion" to men (see for example, II. 22-62). This "aversion," although in part the affectation of the coquette ("aversion" would seem to be a "lady's word,") is psychologically quite true. She prefers the company of such as Plausible and Novel, those "apes and echoes of men," whose effeminacy is stressed throughout the play. And it is not merely a "comic convention" or the necessities of plot that leads Wycherley to portray Olivia as immediately attracted to the epicene "boy" Fidelia upon first sight. In fact, Olivia's relations with *men* are not primarily sexual—they are exploitative and reveal her repulsion. She plays the coquette in order to gain the victory over them represented by the wealth they give her. She manipulates men, whom she instinctively senses as her enemies. In this she is sister not to Molière's coquette, Célimène, but to her much nearer relative, Mr. Horner of *The Country Wife*, whose hostility to women, his abuse and manipulation of them, are at the center of that play.

The subplot of *The Plain Dealer* presents the Widow Blackacre, a fiercely litigious woman, whose main pleasure in life is found in the law courts of Westminster Hall. She is introduced in the first act as a furious woman; she storms Manly's lodgings—to serve him with a subpoena. Freeman recognizes the woman about to enter: "The Widow Blackacre, is it not? That litigious she-petty-fogger, who is at law and difference with all the world.... Manly: ... she has no pleasure but in vexing others" (I. 406-407; 418-19). The Widow, we are told, is kinswoman to Olivia, and indeed she shares Olivia's anger; she is an obsessed personality, at war with the world. Her continual and aggressive litigation is the channel for her intense feelings. A clue to the source of her anger is revealed when we see that her ultimate horror is to be once again under "covert baron," that is, under a husband's legal protection and control. When in the last act, Freeman, who has pursued her for her fortune, succeeds in forcing her into either marriage or a settlement, she complains that "Matrimony, to a woman, is worse than excommunication in depriving her of the benefit of the law, and I would rather be deprived of life" (V. ii. 468-70). The Widow, an energetic and aggressive woman, resents her limited role as a woman, a role she finds both confining and degrading. Neither the Widow nor Olivia modify or repent of their anger. The Widow, although forced to a financial settlement by Freeman, militantly offers legal aid to her kinswoman. In different ways, both women resent and reject the male and struggle against it through devious practices. Their aggression is often comic; it fails finally, yet their characterization is surprisingly complex (surely the Widow goes beyond a mere "humor" character), and their shared anger reflects that of the central character, Manly.

Although the anger of Olivia and the Widow is recognizable at once, that of another major character, Freeman, may be less apparent. His immediate source, as everyone has agreed, is Molière's Philinte. Philinte stands as foil to Alceste; his reasonable and tolerant acceptance of the way of the world sets off the extravagance, the blindness of Alceste's indictment of society, although finally Philinte may not represent Molière's final perception of the right way of social conduct and thought.[9] Freeman is only superficially like Philinte, for unlike Philinte he embodies no philosophy of toleration and detachment. He does insist that there must be some ceremony in social life ("no professing, no ceremony at all in friendship, were as unnatural and as undecent as in religion" [I. 220-21]), but Wycherley has denied to Freeman Philinte's expression of a social philosophy which, if limited, is liberal, consistent, and coherent. Instead, Freeman advocates compliance with social forms merely for one's own self-interest, not in order that society function with amiable civility and order.

But it is important to note that beneath the ceremonious flattery of compliments and hugs, lies malice. Freeman's laughing detachment does not signal acceptance and toleration (*tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*) but malice and hostility. When he says of those who practice hypocrisy and deceit in a corrupt society, "Well, they understand the world," he does not forgive them their understanding nor the world its corruption. His attitude is announced in his first lines when he learns that Manly has thrust out Lord Plausible: "Faith, I am sorry you would let the fop go. I intended to have some sport with him" (I. 166-67). And lest we think that Freeman's sport is detached, amused, and playful, we hear, a few lines later, Freeman's true attitude to those at Westminster Hall whom he has flattered: "when their backs were turned did I not tell you they were rogues, villains, rascals whom I despised and hated?" (II. 243-44). Wycherley's design is to allow us to see Freeman's anger and hostility toward the "world"— however that anger and hostility may be expressed through wit and laughter.

Freeman's hostility takes a more specific form. Although he can acknowledge that women "are not all Olivias," often he expresses hostility toward them. One of the first such expressions comes in Act II, when, just as Freeman had suspected, Olivia proves a mercenary jilt. Freeman turns to the astonished Manly:

> Well, you see now mistresses, like friends, are lost by letting them handle your money, and most women are such kind of witches, who can have no power over a man unless you give them money; but when once they have got any from you, they never leave you, till they have all. Therefore I never dare give a woman a farthing. (II. 770-75)

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[9] Martin Turnell, *The Classical Moment: Studies of Corneille, Molière, and Racine* (1948; rpt. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1971), pp. 104-05.

Critics have wondered why Wycherley did not follow his source, Molière, and portray a love relationship between Freeman and Eliza as Molière does with Philinte and Éliante. But surely Freeman's hostility towards the world and specifically towards women disqualifies him from any relationship other than the one he actually carries on: the exploitative pursuit of the rich (if old and ugly) Widow Blackacre.

There is a curious parallel among Manly, Freeman, Olivia, and the Widow; all are incapable of love owing to their anger—anger expressed in a variety of ways. Manly settles his love on a reflection of himself in Olivia; Olivia her desire on a boyish female. The Widow rejects the overtures of two suitors; Freeman pursues without either love or lust the rich, old Widow. All are at odds with their society; all feel anger—and all are disqualified from experiencing genuine love. Those other than Manly remain prey to their own psychological disabilities. Manly, of course, overcomes these feelings of anger in the recognition of Fidelia.

The ending of *The Plain Dealer* offers a baffling problem. Manly, in his discovery of Fidelia's real identity, is immediately altered: his anger and distrust of the world is seemingly dissipated by the example of Fidelia's virtue. This ending has seemed to many psychologically improbable and dramatically disastrous. Indeed it may seem akin to the typical conclusion of the so-called sentimental comedy represented by Steele's *The Conscious Lovers*. The key to the ending is obviously Fidelia, who appears to be a figure from the romance tradition (she is often said to be a recreation of the Viola of *Twelfth Night*) oddly placed in a satirical comedy of corrupt city practice. But it may be an error to believe that the romance mode must be at odds with the predominantly realistic and satirical mode of the play. We should recall that often in English comedy the two modes are thematically complementary,[10] and this is surely the case in *The Plain Dealer*, where Fidelia as romance heroine has an important thematic function.

In Fidelia we observe the quest of the disguised girl, a quest in which she will be severely tried, proven, and at the end receive self-fulfillment in her complement, Manly. Her origins are mysterious; she is wealthy through her late father, "a gentleman of the North, of no mean extraction" (V. iii. 152-53). Her desire is to prove herself worthy of Manly, whose courage and honor render complete her own love, faith, and constancy. Moreover, the union with Manly is for her life-preserving; in her first appearance she tells Manly, "Why, will you leave me behind then? (*Aside*) If you would preserve my life, I'm sure you should not" (I. 368-69). She must undergo fear, humiliation, even physical violence before her true identity is revealed and her worth proven. She is attacked physically by both Vernish and Olivia in a frightening and humiliating manner; she escapes sexual violation only narrowly. And the fear she feels is associated with death; as Vernish attacks her, she cries out "O! O! Rather than you shall drag me to a death so horrid and so shameful I'll die here a thousand deaths" (IV. ii. 408-10). Moreover, she must endure the angry taunts of Manly and hear his professions of love for Olivia. Throughout the play, Wycherley contrasts Fidelia against Olivia, whose actions, though quite understandable psychologically, are associated with the diabolic. Both women are disguised: Fidelia literally; Olivia by her shrewd playing of a deceptive role. Manly can penetrate neither disguise until Olivia deliberately drops her pretence and mocks her victim. This recognition is contrasted to that moment at the end of the play at which Fidelia stands by accident revealed. Manly has become aware of what both women are, and he sees that Fidelia embodies the perfection he had mistakenly thought embodied in Olivia.

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[10] Eugene M. Waith points out the interaction of the two modes in "The Comic Mirror and the World of Glass," *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 9 (1966), 16-23. "It is better," Waith suggests, "to speak of two modes of vision, in some ways complementary, and both often employed in one play." Both the romance and the realistic/satiric modes "present images of life, but...each reflects a different kind of reality" (p. 22).

If Fidelia seeks and finds her completion in Manly, her own action on Manly is curative: she is the means to his self-recognition and rejuvenation. In IV. i., when Manly hears from Fidelia that Olivia has attempted to seduce her and breaks out in a frenzied tirade, Fidelia has a crucial aside: "Poor man, how uneasy he is! I have hardly the heart to give him so much pain though withal I give him a cure and to myself new life" (ll. 119-21). Fidelia has asked to be tried, and her blood, shed in the murderous fight with Vernish, attests symbolically to the sacrifices that she is prepared to make and the life-giving qualities she brings to a heroic but incomplete man. By carrying to Manly the news of Olivia's perverse treachery, Fidelia is the instrument of Manly's pain, but the pain is a part of his cure: painfully he will come to recognize what Olivia is and how dangerous she is. And he will recognize at once in the final scene that what Fidelia embodies is real, obtainable, and offers a new sense of himself and the world. She is the means by which he achieves an important psychological catharsis: through recognition of what she is, the explosive anger Manly contains is dissipated. And Fidelia, presented as weak throughout the play, is herself incomplete without what Manly embodies. "There is nothing certain in the world, sir, but my truth and your courage," says Fidelia (IV. i. 168-69), and this is what Manly must and does come to recognize. Earlier in the play, at the end of Act I, Manly has asked Freeman to accompany him to Olivia's lodgings, ". . .if your weak faith doubts this miracle of a woman" (I. 620-21). Now, in the last act, before him stands true faith, the "miracle of a woman" that he has sought for and always believed to exist. What we see on stage before us then is a physical action which reveals a psychological one: the violence and confusion of the darkened room, the lights and recognition, are the correlatives to the cathartic dissipation of Manly's emotional confusion, his anger, and the replacement of these by the knowledge that what he has most desired to believe in is indeed real and obtainable. Yet perhaps his discovery of Fidelia is not so much union as reunion—the restoration of faith in what he had believed in, although in a psychologically unhealthy manner, from the beginning of the play. It seems irrelevant to argue that what she represents is out of place in the corrupt world of the play, that she is the product of wish-fulfillment, or that the qualities she embodies are unobtainable. The conclusion of *The Plain Dealer* is not a concession; it is an assertion—such qualities do exist; Fidelia embodies them, and the qualities that she embodies are quite as real as those represented by her opposite, Olivia, or by those who engage in Bays's grand dance. I hope that it is not improper to point out that Manly's recognition is that of Lear. It marks Manly's passage from unhealthy and unrealistic idealization to valid belief in the miracle of beauty, truth, love, and virtue.

GRANT HOLLY*

Travel and Translation: Textuality in "Gulliver's Travels"

I take it as axiomatic that intertextuality, acknowledged and unacknowledged, is always at work in our readings of "individual" texts, and, therefore, I can say without embarassment that in part, at least, this essay, itself a part of a larger study on the nature of interpretation, grows out of a reading of Freud's theory of repression.[1] What is so important in Freud's theory, which is logically, if not chronologically, the source of most modern theories of interpretation, is the way it both suggests and represses the identification of the interpretive act with repression itself.[2] For Freud repression is not merely the process which confines or conceals material which interpretation attempts to recover, though that is what the apparent psychological imperialism of his project taken as a whole seems to suggest (" Where id was, ego shall be "). It is also a process of creation, elaboration, explanation, and interpretation.[3] What is repressed, in other words (and this is true both in

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[1] For a history of Freud's use of the concept of repression and an assessment of its importance in his work, see J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1973), pp. 390-94.

[2] The work of both Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida is witness to the importance of this idea. See Derrida's "Freud and the Scene of Writing," trans. Jeffrey Mehlman, *Yale French Studies*, No. 48, 74-117. On p. 113, for example, Derrida says "Writing is unthinkable without repression," an idea which Mehlman contextualizes in Derrida's "... effort ... to show that the play of difference, which has generally been viewed as *exterior* to a (spatial or temporal) *present*, is, in fact, already at work *within* that present as the condition of its possibility. Whereby the very distinction between inner and outer is thrown into question ...," Introductory Note, p. 73.

[3] See Freud's "Repression" (1915), *The Standard Edition*, trans. James Strachey, *et. al.* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1957), 14, 146-58—especially p. 149, where Freud describes the proliferative and expressive qualities of repression and pp. 154-158 where he discusses "substitute formations." When Freud discusses dream interpretation in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *The Introductory Lectures*, it is clear that the dream, the greatest project of the unconscious, is constituted by the dreamer's sleep experience, his waking account, the analyst's

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terms of the being of the reader and the being of the text), is the dominance of signifying over the signified. This repression is perpetuated in all analytics which seek to discover the meaning or meanings of the text.

The essay on *Gulliver's Travels* which follows is divided into two parts. The first attempts to show the way in which Swift's text makes signifying its subject, by implying a vast textuality which incorporates the reader and which, therefore, he can participate in but is no longer free to comment on.[4] As a way of avoiding the hypostasizing of signifying as the signified of the text, the second part of the essay attempts to indicate the problematic of differencing along which signifying plays without fear of falling into sense or significance.

I

The World and the Book

> It must—and the paradox is ever-changing yet inescapable—say, for the first time, what has already been said, and repeat tirelessly what was, nevertheless, never said. . . . Commentary averts the chance element of discourse by giving it its due; it gives us the opportunity to say something other than the text itself, but on the condition that it is the text which is uttered and, in some ways, finalized. . . . The novelty lies no longer in what is said, but in its reappearance.
>
> Michel Foucault,
> "Discourse on Language"

Gulliver's Travels elaborates a problematic of redundancy: a problematic which predicates the impossibility of escaping resemblances and the necessity of repetition. In spite of the apparent strangeness of his adventures, it is impossible for there to be generated in Gulliver's narrative a story which is not like other stories, just as it is impossible for Gulliver to make a voyage which does not take him home—both in terms of its ultimate destination and the standards according to which

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interpretation, the analysand's response, etc. Similarly, the fact that the dream is neither the latent nor the manifest content alone but the shifting relationship between them, opens the way for a potentially endless series of interpretations.

[4] I wish to make it clear at this point that my critique of Swift criticism is not directed to the substance or the imaginativeness of that large body of writing, but to its point of view. Instead of accounting for the text, it seems to me that criticism participates in it, rewriting it and transforming it in the process.

he views his discoveries—or for him to encounter a creature which does not resemble man. Gulliver can never really voyage because he can never exceed the limits of what he already knows.

Though this is not the usual statement of the case, it is in fact consonant with the critical approaches to the *Travels* which are usually taken. Most criticism, whether historical or interpretive, is committed to dealing with the text in terms of its signified, to attempting to recover the original clarity and wholeness of that signified before it fell into writing and was broken by articulations. The text *qua* text, the text as signifying material, cunningly eludes the analyst, who reads it merely as an arrow that points to a signified of transcendental importance, or gazes through its "transparency" to regions beyond. Paradoxically, however, the code of analysis will not admit either the "transcendental" or the "beyond" into the parameters of its commentary. Analysis is pinioned by the opposing intentions of eluding the text and being faithful to it; and while in the service of the former, it seeks to be original and innovative, it must, according to the constraints of the latter, labor like Borges' Pierre Menard to repeat in its own time and place the object of its commentary—to say, for the first time, what has already been said.

One consequence of this situation is that literary analysis turns out to be a ritual and compulsive (rather than analytic) activity, for in terms both of the text upon which it comments and the audience to which it speaks (fellow critics), it must invent a predetermined har-

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[5] There are, of course, a great many essays on *Gulliver's Travels* arrayed along the spectrum of literary concern from the historical to the interpretive. Nevertheless, whether we are dealing with Harold Williams' identification of the political allegory in Book I, or N. O. Brown's discovery of Freud's theorem of the "identity of what is highest or lowest in human nature," i. e., of "the anal character of civilization," the text is being looked at as the index of a significance which on the one hand seems to pre-exist it, and, on the other, conforms neatly to the kind of understanding the reader brings to it. In "The Publisher to the Reader," "Richard Sympson" explains that his editorial practice was governed by his determination "to fit the Works as much as possible to the general Capacity of Readers." In addition, a number of influential studies regard the Travels as containing moral and philosophical lessons which teach the folly of pride and imply the value of moderation. See, for example, Samuel Holt Monk, "The Pride of Lemuel Gulliver," *Sewane Review*, 73 (1955, 48-71; and Kathleen Williams, "Gulliver's Voyage to the Houyhnhnms," *ELH*, 18 (1951), 275-86. The strategy of these approaches is the establishment of an intellectual and moral center, which acts like a charmed circle protecting those in the know.

mony. The true innovativeness of criticism resides in its ability to feign surprise at the discovery in the text of the very principles which animate its own discourse. Another consequence is that while analysis masquerades as a different kind of discourse from the texts it talks about, it is in fact an extension of those texts.

Satire is especially seductive in this regard, because it seems to posit the unspoken view of an author, a truth or truths beyond the instabilities of signifying, temptingly obscured by the text, fetchingly draped in fable; as well as suggesting that the elements of the narrative are substitutes, perhaps part of a systematic code, which stands for things for which there are in fact no substitutes.

The flexible text of the Scriblerian tradition, however, with its true beginnings which are false beginnings, its pseudonymous editors, publishers, friends of the author, its personae, its annotations, its systematic way in other words, of blurring the distinctions between outside and inside, the world and the book, attacks the illusions of the authoritative text, a signified which can escape the signifying process, and a commentary which is part of a different discourse from the work it comments on. These latter ideas are the very foundations of criticism, and one suspects, its *raison d'etre*, for they permit us to assert our *superiority* to the work, to proclaim our *understanding* of what it is *about*, and thus to locate ourselves beyond the flux of its signifying in the "real world" to which it refers.

On the other hand, the boundaries which separate the world of *Gulliver's Travels* from the world to which it refers turn out to be self-effacing: both in terms of the story and the manuscript tradition. The task essential to essays on *Gulliver's Travels* of repeating in their own time and place what has been repeated in the text—the original conception or fact which existed before writing in the mind of the author, or in the world in which he lived, and which, coincidentally, happens to conform to the essayist's understanding—is disconcertingly the same task undertaken by Gulliver himself. Wherever he goes and whatever he sees, his experiences are communicated as a ratio of what is already familiar to him. The Lilliputians are twelve times smaller than man, while the Brobdingnagians are twelve times larger, Glubbdubdrib is about one-third the size of the Isle of Wight, Brobdingnag has a liquor which tastes like a "small Cider," flies the size of "a Dunstable Lark" and wasps which are "as large as Partridges" and sound like the "Drone of Bagpipes" (III, iii). The examples are countless. Gulliver is always linked to the familiar by a chain of similes. For him and his reader alike, the *Travels* takes place in an atmosphere of metaphor which makes everything comparable to something else.[6] Similarly, though it is well known that Swift complained of the liberties that Mott, the bookseller, took with his work, it is equally well known that Swift took pains to occult his own relationship to the *Travels*.[7] Mott told Pope that the manuscript was "dropped at his house in the dark, from a hackney coach," and the instructions that went along with it encouraged the publisher to make whatever alterations his skill and judgment in determining the tastes of readers deemed necessary.[8] When Faulkner asked Swift for a correct version, the copy to which he was sent turned out to be nonexistent. Indeed, though there exist corrected versions of the *Travels*, they differ from one another and are apparently not the origin of Faulkner's 1735 edition (generally considered authoritative), the source of which remains obscure.[9]

This strategy, not unusual for Swift, of disguising the ownership of his work, is not merely part of the history of the book, i. e., the history of its coming into being as an object quite apart from the possibilities of signifying it opens, it is the very stuff of its natural history, i. e., the principle of its elaboration through displacement, substitution, translation: the flow of textuality on which the potentially quiescent book is perpetually carried towards other shores. In Gulliver's letter to his cousin, dated 1727 but conjectured to have been composed for the 1735 edition where it first appears, Gulliver complains about the addition, to the first edition, of remarks about Queen Anne which he says he never made, but admits they are an accurate representation of his views.[10] Additions to the work, in other words, seem to be in keeping with it. When he complains shortly thereafter that his cousin has "either omitted some material Circumstances or minced or changed them in a Manner that I do hardly know mine own Work," it may mean that the text has been altered beyond recognition from its original fixed significance, but it can also mean that the boundaries between the original and interpolations are indistinguishable, thus obliterating the uniqueness of the original—making it just another version. The manuscript, he goes on to say, has been destroyed. He has supplied corrections, but he is uncertain of them.[11] Since the one which he mentions, that "Brobdingnag" ought to appear "Brobdingrag," has been completely ignored by the editor, and since Gulliver regards language as moving steadily towards the unintelligible ("as I remember upon each Return to mine own Country, their old Dialect was so altered that I could Hardly understand the new," A Letter from Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson), we have no reason to believe that there can be an authoritative text or a definitive reading: like the changing dialect, the text may be in a state of perpetual metamorphosis.

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[6] My use of the terms "metaphor" and "metonymy" is drawn from Roman Jakobson, "The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles," in Chapter 5 of *Fundamentals of Language* by Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle (1956), reprinted in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, ed. Hazard Adams (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), pp. 1113-16.

[7] Harold Williams, "Introduction" to *Gulliver's Travels* in *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1941), pp. xxi-xxviii. References to *Gulliver's Travels* come from this edition and will be cited parenthetically.

[8] A. Norman Jeffares, "Introduction," to *Fair Liberty was all His Cry: A Tercentenary Tribute to Jonathan Swift, 1667-1745*, ed. A. Norman Jeffares (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. x, and Williams, p. xxiv.

[9] Harold Williams, pp. xxiv-xxviii.

[10] "But I do not remember I gave you Power to consent, that any thing should be inserted: Therefore, as to the latter, I do here renounce every thing

In *Gulliver's Travels* the narrative gestures towards itself as signifying material in the repeated occurrence of emblems of the text—instances within the narrative which replace the signified or transform it into the image of another text—from which we can infer that the way out of the narrative is barred by the proliferation of substitutions, translations, and comparisons which constitute an endless and inescapable textuality. The alternations of reduction and expansion which characterize the first two books of the *Travels*, for example, are emblematic of the interchangeability of the world and the book. Gulliver, the student of medicine, navigation, languages, of "the best Authors, ancient and modern; being always provided with a great Number of Books," (I, i)—finds himself besieged by beings the size of illustrations. Like the reader of the *Travels* compelled to replicate his approach to it in

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of that Kind; particularly a Paragraph about her Majesty the late Queen *Anne*, of most pious and glorious Memory; although I did reverence and esteem her more than any of human Species." (A Letter from Capt. Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson).

[11] "I hear the original Manuscript is all destroyed, since the Publication of my Book. Neither have I any Copy left; however, I have sent you some Corrections, which you may insert, if ever there should be a second Edition: And yet I cannot stand to them, but shall leave that Matter to my Judicious and candid Readers, to adjust it as they please" (A Letter from Capt. Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson),

his reading, Gulliver is a prisoner of his own world reduced to the dimensions of the book. This, however, is not the only permutation of the situation. Gulliver, the gigantic form whose limbs are virtually beyond the ken of the Lilliputians, whose body they swarm over like ciphers on a page, is himself the emblem of that textuality into which the reader, like the Lilliputians, descends, and where all that he encounters reflects the textuality that engenders it, producing, like the Lilliputians' account of the contents of Gulliver's pockets, a potentially endless round of circumlocutions. The voyage to Brobdingnag emphasizes this process by reversing it: the text expands to the size of the world and Gulliver enters it, literally, inhabiting the miniature world of their toys, walking through the pages of a book in order to read it, pacing a map of the kingdom even as he paced the island of Lilliput. What was once construed as the world, is now, in a larger context, shown to be a text, a transformation by contextualization that implicates the reader and his world as well.

As opposed to the interpretations of *Gulliver's Travels* which see it formulating its significance at a high pitch of meaningfulness above language and beyond the characterizations of its text, I suggest that we regard its " meanings " as part of the strategy of self-perpetuation of a signifying urge, more powerful than " meaning," but being no more than it is, on the surface, ready to efface itself to create the illusion of an independent purpose, a beyond which can be voyaged into, an otherness which can be discovered. Gulliver's experience, indeed his very being, betrays this signifying urge. For him, expression is constantly beneath the semantic and comprehensible. As a perpetual foreigner, even on his returns home, Gulliver is always addressed in an alien " jabber," to use his own word. As an oddity wherever he goes, Gulliver's significance is constantly being read not only in what he says, but in what he is, in the ambiguous signs of his size and shape. In Lilliput, his significance is understood in terms of his bodily functions, in the impact of his great hands and feet, and in the continued signifying of decay which would be brought about by his death. In Houyhnhnm land he is read according to his physical shape and the affectation of clothing—a system of signs which indicates the limits of the body. In Book III, Gulliver takes the place of the reader, confronting in the Academy of Lagado and the series of adventures that follow, analogues to the episode to which we have just alluded: the project for the decipherment of feces, or the perpetual translation of speech brought about by the endless physical and mental decay of the

Struldbruggs, for example. Throughout, his own attempt to communicate and the responses of those he meets take place on the level of cries and gestures, on the mute and strident level of physiology, of a speech which is ingrained beyond any hope of interpretation. The spectrum of this speech ranges from the undefinable roars of the Yahoos to the inarticulatable speech of the Houyhnhnms—ranges, in other words, along a continuum of ambiguous noise which Gulliver perpetuates (since it is incomprehensible) in his "understanding" as we do in ours.

Let us say then that the true subject of *Gulliver's Travels* is the legendary discourse which animates the narrative. This legend manifests itself in two ways. In the first it is seen by Gulliver and the reader as an ever-receding spirituality, a ghostly presence[12] which flies before the material onslaught of the events which constitute Gulliver's life or the signifiers which confront the reader, in precisely the same way that the purposes of Gulliver's voyages elude his efforts to achieve them, and Gulliver's account of his travels fails to eliminate the reader's questions concerning (the significance of) what took place. This is the teleological aspect of the legend, the aspect which awaits the reader, veiled in the darkness of the unsaid, and towards which the narrative gazes for the solution of questions of meaning and purpose. Insofar as the narrative is seen as pursuing this legend, it is being read metonymically, i. e., as a series of parts building towards completion.[13]

But there is implicit in this manifestation of the legend another aspect, one which reverses the priorities and expectations of the first. The sign of this second manifestation of the legend is the analogical relationship which joins what are generally considered to be distinct categories: the world and events (out there) on the one hand, and the text and signifiers on the other. What are for Gulliver "the events" which make up his "life" are for the reader merely signifiers which enable him to read. On the other hand, Gulliver, forced to encounter his "experiences" as a foreigner, is constantly "living his life" on the level of signifiers, i. e., as a reader, while the "reader," whose work the narrative is, whose " reading " is a making because his effort is needed to *transform* the text, though he may discuss the narrative as a record of events, as the sign of a transcendental signified, experiences it as an event in itself.[14] The narrative, from this point of view, is its own legend, the long signature of narrativity.

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[12] See, for example, F. R. Leavis, "The Irony of Swift," originally published in *Determinations*, 1934, rptd. in *Fair Liberty was all His Cry*, ed. A. N. Jeffares, p. 118: "The positive itself appears only negatively—a kind of skeletal presence, rigid enough, but without life or body; a necessary precondition as it were of direct negation."

[13] See above, n. 6.

It is this aspect of the narrative that elaborates a problematic of redundancy, for in it narrativity, which is a kind of signifying, is itself revealed as the signified. And the tendency towards the expressed, towards, that is, a revelation of purpose or meaning, is repeatedly included in the larger strategy of exploiting the means of expression.

Consider, for example, the initial paragraph of the first chapter of Part One, " A Voyage to Lilliput " : [15]

> My Father had a small Estate in *Nottinghamshire*; I was the Third of five Sons. He sent me to *Emanuel-College in Cambridge*, at Fourteen Years old, where I resided three Years, and applied my self close to my Studies: But the Charge of maintaining me (although I had a very scanty Allowance) being too great for a narrow Fortune; I was bound Apprentice to Mr. *James Bates*, an eminent Surgeon in *London*, with whom I continued four Years; and my Father now and then sending me small Sums of Money, I laid them out in learning Navigation, and other Parts of the Mathematicks, useful to those who intend to travel, as I always believed it would be some time or other my Fortune to do. When I left Mr. *Bates*, I went down to my Father; where, by the Assistance of him and my uncle *John*, and some other Relations, I got Forty Pounds, and a Promise of Thirty Pounds a Year to maintain me at *Leyden*: There I studied Physick two Years and seven Months, knowing it would be useful in long Voyages.

The overall tone of the paragraph is one of explanation. In telling us that his father's estate is " small " and that he is the third of five sons,

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[14] Julia Kristeva, " Phonetics, Phonology and the Impulsional Bases," trans. Caren Greenberg, *Diacritics*, 4, No. 3 (1974), 33-37, and Philip E. Lewis, Revolutionary Semiotics," *Diacritics*, 4, No. 3 (1974), 28-32.

[15] Merritt Lawlis, " Swift's Uses of Narrative: The Third Chapter of the Voyage to Lilliput," *JEPG*, 72 (1973), 1-16, has a similar interpretation of the first paragraph. However, his conclusion, that the work *has* a number of meanings, is fundamentally different from my own, which attempts to indicate the dynamics of its signifying.

Gulliver alludes to circumstances of economic and social constraint which will presumably contribute to an explanation of why something happened, of how he got to be where he is, etc. However, what follows is a series of statements, each of which perpetuates the tone of explanation because it is eliminated as an explanation by the succeeding statement. Gulliver's career at college might well be what the first sentence explained; or the details of that career: Emanuel-College, Cambridge, his being fourteen years old, the three years residency and his dedication to his studies, might contribute directly to an explanation. Neither of these alternatives is the case, however. "But" seems to negate what has immediately preceded it. The phrase which it initiates reinvokes the issue of economic and social constraint and could serve, it is true, as an explanation for Gulliver's being "bound Apprentice" (though not for why he is apprenticed to a physician, or to "Mr. James Bates"). Further, his being apprenticed to a physician named Mr. James Bates might be part of an explanation, but at this point, these explanations, and potential explanations, are themselves undermined. Gulliver chooses to spend his allowance on the study of navigation, and he reveals that he has, all along, intended to travel.

The force of this revelation transforms everything that has preceded it. Clearly, the paragraph builds up to the word "travel." It is presumably the outcome which the information that preceded it explains. Yet none of this information really bears directly and in itself on Gulliver becoming a traveler. The explanation of this outcome is, interestingly enough, attributed simultaneously to the most internal and the most external of sources: "Belief," "always" held, and therefore, the implication is, more profound than any reasons which might be found to justify it, and "Fortune," which is always mysterious and beyond the reach of explanation. The intimate and the vast, each in its own way, appeals to our sense of the inadequacy of language, and to a signified outside the influence of the sign. (*What I really mean* in terms of the ego's private sense of the inexpressible value of what he says, and *What I really mean* in terms of the significance of the ego's life taken as a whole). If "Fortune" is the explanation, the cause of which "travel" is the inevitable result, then what precedes Gulliver's revelation is less an explanation than it is a demonstration: in this case a demonstration of the way in which fortune is signified by a series of irrelevant explanations; and, in any case, if we use this paragraph as a paradigm for the whole text, of the way in which the text will seem to require something not textual, some transcendental signified, to explain its significance. This view is represented by all those critics who see Swift's satire as saying one thing by saying something else, or who think of the narrative in terms of what view, philosophy, politics, etc., it criticizes or advocates.

However, this view cannot be sustained if we pursue our analysis. "Fortune" does not suffice as an explanation, because what it explains is by its very nature unfinished, or more properly, in transit. Indeed, strictly defined, "travel" is pure process, neither here nor there, but a perpetual on-the-way. Far from permitting the cessation of the series of postponements that preceded it, "travel" seems to perpetuate them in an image. It is, in other words, a redundancy. Moreover, it is not "travel," alone, that we are given here, but Gulliver's intention to travel. In this context, I submit, to intend to travel is rather like meditating on the possibility of staring fixedly out the window: the one is the iconic equivalent of the other. The phenomenon of intention (which is part of the tone of explanation) seems to suspend the occurrence of the event, i. e., "life" or "travel" for Gulliver and the signified for the reader, and offers in its place a series of preparations. In so doing, it creates the illusion that the narrative develops according to the rule of metonymic contingency, i. e., what is said is one of the potential outcomes of what has been said, and, in its turn, predicates a congeries of possibilities, one of which is what will be said. And in a sense this is true.[16] However, in this passage, the past, present and future of narrative are also ways of saying the same thing.

To make this point it is worth considering these aspects of the narrative one at a time. 1) The future is clearly the direction in which the paragraph points, and the realm which contains the anticipated and, therefore, apparently unexperienced "travel." 2) The past, just as clearly, has been a time taken up by postponements and preparations. Here, however, the situation becomes more complex. Since travel is itself oriented towards the future, and since travel is the process which postpones "being here" from one place to another and marks the period of preparation which separates departure from arrival, there is the clear sense that what has been postponed or prepared for is embedded in the postponement and in the preparation—that the future, in other words, is embedded in the past. This somewhat abstract statement of the case applies to the series of non-events (non-arrivals) which constitute the paragraph up to the mention of travel. At that point, as we have already noted, the redundancy is doubled by the merger of travel and intention. After travel is mentioned, Gulliver proceeds to relate a series of unacknowledged trips. He *leaves* Mr. Bates, *goes* to his father, and is suddenly (without any account of his journey) in Leyden, and all this is merely preparation for travel. Once we have been sensitized to this proliferation of equivalences, we cannot help but notice that the study of "Physic" [for] "two Years and seven Months" is itself a long voyage. The predominant force in the paragraph has become metaphor. 3) Throughout Gulliver's repetition (narration) of his past, he suppresses the present moment implicit in that past when actual travelling took place. This present is repeated in the reader's present, for the process of reading is analogous to the process of travelling, especially in that the reader suppresses this process (signifying) in expectation of an explanation (signified), just as Gulliver has suppressed his actual travelling in expectation of taking a trip.

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[16] See below, pp. 150-151.

II

The Mirror and the Map

> Satyr is a sort of Glass, wherin Beholders do generally discover every body's Face but their Own....
>
> "The Battle of the Books"

> At last I beheld several Animals standing in a Field...."
>
> *Gulliver's Travels*

The definition of satire which opens the "Author's Preface to 'The Battle of the Books'" is certainly an epigram on the extent of human pride and the reluctance with which men engage in self-criticism—among the main themes drawn from Swift's satires by modern readers—but it is both more than that and a remark of a different order. This extraordinary statement, which encourages us to think of a book as a mirror and a reader both as the characters within and author of the text, marshals the machinery of repetition as part of a strategy of displacement and alteration. What is it that the beholder sees but fails to recognize in the glass but his own beholding, i. e., the process by which the text as an empty signifying is given a face by his reading.[17]

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[17] See Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I," *Écrits, A Selection*, trans., Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), pp. 1-7.

The word " translation " implies a journey which is a journey home: the return to what was already, if only potentially, there—an assertion of the mirror symmetry of things. At the same time, however, translation begins a never-ending process—the ever-renewed recognition of discrepancies which lead to an endless round of compensatory circumlocutions. So, for example, the Lilliputian explorers who descend into Gulliver's pockets to catalogue their contents must translate what they find into familiar terms. The process destroys the validity of names, but offers no alternative to them. Things disappear beneath a cloud of words which grows with the proddings of analysis, until we must suspect that the significance of names is their gesture towards the system which produces them, a gesture which is acted out in their endless proliferation into other names.

For the returning Gulliver, home is not what it used to be. A new child, a race of Lilliputian sheep and a collection of Brobdingnagian ephemera (which translate the hairs of the king's beard into a comb, and a corn from the maid-of-honor's foot into a cup), the uncontrollable desire to warn the natives of his homeland to beware lest he crush them, or to prance and nay with the horses, his final inability to tolerate the smell of the place, and the perception that even the words which were once familiar to him have undergone an apparent transformation of significance which obscures the outlines of meaning in general, all contribute to the sense of an ineluctable metamorphosis—entropy disturbing the order of the features in the face of identity. Gulliver returns from the looking-glass world, the world which is like his *own*, to find that nothing is the same, that his world is merely *like* the one he has left. In this sea of likenesses, there is no point of reference, no world beyond the text, only a series of maps and the idea of mapping.[18]

Indeed, what the *Travels* reflects is the process of mapping. The letter from " Richard Sympson " entitled " The Publisher to the Reader " which is part of the 1726 edition, admits the " bold " editing of " innumerable Passages relative to the Winds and Tides, as well as Variations and Bearings in the several Voyages.... Likewise the accounts of Longitudes and Latitudes... to fit the Work as much as possible to the general Capacity of Readers." Of course this is part of the satire on nautical language—that there could be so much struck out and still so much left behind, indicates the extravagancies of this sort of jargon. On the other hand, the work's first claim to verisimilitude is through the integrity of these kinds of references, and through the mapping that they would permit. The implication is that it is not what the geologists call "real-world structures"[19] but mapping itself, the system, or mode of dispersal, which can create the illusion of a world, which the text maps. This is not to say that the contemporary reader, at least, would expect to be able to find the flying island of Lilliput by paying careful attention to the text, and to doubt its veracity if he could not. To do so would be regarded as incredibly naive. However, the way satire is typically regarded makes it the map of some distinct but nevertheless substantial continent *or* archipelago of meaning. By analogy, reading does not carry us beyond the text but situates us within it. What *Gulliver's Travels* satirizes can be said to be the illusion of a world beyond the map, of a signified beyond the flux of signifying. What it reveals is that the notion of a world beyond the map and of a text which can be confined in a book are themselves part of a discourse, which speaks the world, and which, in every utterance about the world, is being mapped.[20]

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[18] The thoughts of contemporary geographers are interesting in this regard. Robinson and Petchenick, for example, conclude in *The Nature of Maps* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), "...a map is a graphic representation of a milieu," (p. 16), and " There is no constant, apart, ' objective ' reality either in the milieu or in the map " (p. 69). As my colleagues Eugen Baer and Ben Atkinson have pointed out in conversation, Korzybski's distinction between the map and the territory seems to be falacious. The map is the territory.

We can chart four ways in which *Gulliver's Travels* reflects mapping, each of which characterizes not only what takes place in the narrative, but also our reading of it. First, there is the project of mapping by innuendo which we are encouraged to engage in because of the general ambience of satire. This charting of the invisible by what is visible on the mirror's surface is like the work of the Lilliputian tailors who fashion a suit of clothes for Gulliver based on calculations derived from the measurement of his thumb, and seems to be emblematic of the way this section should be read: asking the reader to work from smaller to larger, drawing a picture of his own world from Gulliver's account of the Lilliputians'. However, the "larger" of the Brobdingnagian adventure which follows, and the caricature of the work of the Lilliputian tailors by the mathematics of Laputa in Book III, suggests that once begun, mapping leads only to a series of versions.

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[19] David Harvey, *Explanation in Geography* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969, paperback edition 1973, rpt. 1976), p. 372: "The map is, therefore, simply a model of a theory about the real world structures."

[20] My use of the term "discourse" is derived from Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Random House, 1972), pp. 21-76.

Here we see the close relationship of the mirror and the map, both of which in their purest sense attempt to replicate the world—the former at a glance, the latter by the patient elaboration of a representational network so refined that nothing will be able to escape it. This is the fantasy that Josiah Royce engaged in his *The World and the Individual* (1899):

> Let us imagine that a portion of the soil of England has been leveled off perfectly and that on it a cartographer traces a map of England. The job is perfect; there is no detail of the soil of England, no matter how minute, that is not registered on the map; everything there has its correspondence. This map, in such a case, should contain the map of a map, which should contain a map of the map of the map, and so on to infinity.[21]

Just as mirrors map the beholder, dispersing his image according to the rules of their surface, so maps mirror the techniques of beholding, arranging everything for the convenience of reading.[22] In Brobdingnag, Gulliver cannot " forbear smiling " :

> when the Queen used to place me upon her Hand towards a Looking-Glass, by which both our persons appeared before me in full View together; and there could be nothing more ridiculous than the Comparison: So that I began to imagine myself dwindled many Degrees below my usual Size. (II, iii)

Gulliver is hardly freed by his self-awareness, however. To break the mirror's spell and redefine the normal, he still must map the Brobdingnagians onto his own world. This problem is the same for the reader who must deal with the lies of the narrative like the Houyhnhnms—asserting the existence of that which he denies—thus making the preposterous the border of truth.

The second form of mapping is the rhetorical mapping which we have already discussed in our analysis of the first paragraph of Book I. It consists of the accumulation of details with the apparent intention of outlining a purpose or, in the case of the navigational information, a place. Since the details fail finally to be resolved into any pattern or outline, we must conclude that it is the role reading plays in completing the rhetorical gestalt which is being mapped.

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[21] Quoted by Jorge Luis Borges, "Partial Magic in the *Quixote*," trans. Anthony Kerrigan, *Labyrinths*, eds. Donald Yates and James Irbey (New York: New Directions, 1964), pp. 195-96.

[22] For an important discussion of mirrors and maps, see Sir Ernst Gombrich, "Review Lecture, Mirror and Map: Theories of Pictorial Representation," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society London B*, 270, 119-49.

The third form of mapping is embodied in the graphics of *Gulliver's Travels*: in the size and shape of the book, the kinds of type, the table of contents, the layout of books and chapters, headnotes, engraved scenes and designs, and, of course, the maps and diagrams. These are aspects of the work on which Swift probably had no direct influence. Nevertheless, they have every right to be considered in an analysis of the *Travels* since, as I have argued, *Gulliver's Travels* is about techniques of portraying significant structures. The work naturally includes the crafts which support its bid for our attention and belief—at whatever level. When we open *Gulliver's Travels*, for example, we are confronted by a "portrait" of its protagonist which sits on a pedestal on which appears CAPT. LEMUEL GULLIVER with the epithet from Horace, *Splendide Mendax*, in script beneath.[23] The oval which frames the portrait is a shape common to both portraits and mirrors, thus underlining the mimetic aspirations of this kind of painting. But the image is not a portrait, pure and simple, for two reasons, both of which indicate the decay of the signified and the predominance of signifying. In the first place, it is the engraving of a portrait, which implies that it is a representation of a representation, a double translation which, though it still achieves the illusion of a three-dimensional object in a two-dimensional space, presents itself much more openly as a mapping, the product of the conventional cuts and striations of a style of engraving.

In the second place, the image cannot be considered a portrait in the usual sense because there is no such person as "Lemuel Gulliver." The frontispiece is marked with the portrait of a skull: it merely exemplifies a mode of signifying—advertises or catalogues a style of engraving which, since in this context it is tied to no thing to be engraved can be regarded as pure fabrication. Following this thought one step further, we can see that the signified of this mode of signifying can be nothing other than the literal "Gulliver," the name inscribed on the pedestal below, which is itself a mode of signifying, unattached to any particular signified but undergoing a continuous process of translation, beginning with the epithet from Horace (which itself requires translation) and leading into the text beyond. As we look at the whole design, what we see is the sign of engraving balanced on the engraving of a sign. What is reflected in the mirror's frame is technique, reading and writing—the discourse that maps the body and according to which the body is read (Gulliver as physician and navigator). While on the blank face of the pedestal, the reflection of Gulliver as pure language, a signifier floating over a signifier, over a double which is another, maps the characteristics of the face above—the heavy black of the eyebrows over the flexible, wiry lines of the other features. Both parts of the frontispiece merge on the level of the interchange of line. The circle of the frame and the rectangles of the background seem to establish the abstract of this linearity, forming in the process the indecipherable hieroglyph of its signature, while within these limits the different realms of picture and language are joined in the larger problematic of differentiation which engenders signifying.

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[23] The frontispiece to which I am referring is the one which appeared in Faulkner's edition of 1735, and which has been reproduced in the standard edition. To discuss the different images of "Lemuel Gulliver" which appeared in the early editions of the *Travels* would require only that I change the details of my analysis, not its conclusions.

Finally there is the mapping of so-called human characteristics on fantastic creatures. Against the critical commonplace that the *Travels* defines "man" by a process of triangulation, as the unspoken signified implied by the extremes of the text, I offer the view that it indicates "man" at every point. The extremes which separate the Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians, Houyhnhnms and Yahoos, and the way, for example, the imagining of the Houyhnhnm race involves contorting their bodies into a sitting position and their using the pastern and hoof in the manner of the opposing thumb and forefinger, prove the elasticity of the concept "human." "Man" is the reflection of a discursive order, whatever constitutes the subject of reading and writing. The text prepares us for this view by making the human difficult to recognize on what we would have thought were its own terms. The work stretches the limits of the human so that the distinction between man and animal disappears. Great animals become mere mouthfuls for the voracious appetite of Gulliver in Lilliput. In Brobdingnag he is reduced to contesting his existence with insects. The natives take him for a kind of weasel, a monkey takes him for its young. By the time he is embraced by the Yahoo female in the fourth book, the idea of human has been so identified with the animal that it is possible for the animal to be identified with the human. "I fell into a beaten Road, where I saw many Tracks of human Feet, and some Cows, but most of Horses," says Gulliver, marooned in Houyhnhnm land. "At last I beheld several Animals in a Field..." (IV, i). Here we see the absolute separation of signifier and signified—for as Gulliver's adventure in Book IV goes on to demonstrate, any of the signs over which he puzzles on the roadway can be the signifiers of a creature with human characteristics.

Rather than thinking of *Gulliver's Travels* as the sign of some signified, however complex, I suggest we think of it as a demonstration of the way the signified grows out of the signifier, think of it as a sign of signifying. From this point of view, the text loses its purposiveness and progresses by means of associations which in themselves indicate a compulsive signifying. As the third book opens, we find Gulliver, acting out elements of his name, living the life of a gull: surrounded by sea, he rests upon a rocky island, reposes in nests made of dry seaweed, dines on eggs. Islands and eggs reflecting one another in their roundness and reifying the circularity which connects Gulliver's life with his name, proliferate into more islands, a series of them explored by Gulliver, until island and egg merge in the flying island. There the predominance of the sign is perpetuated in the geometrical designs which emblazon the clothing of the inhabitants (an indecipherable writing, like the [nearly legible] marks which fill the illustration of the automatic writing machine), by the immersion of the Laputans in the self-contained languages of mathematics and music, and the repetition of circularity which marks the relationship of master and servant, the island and the land beneath, tyrant and tyrannized, body and mind—indeed a host of gull and egg questions around which the book turns—until we realize that Gulliver's return home is no more than the inevitable folding back of the text upon itself.

When Gulliver tells us that in Brobdingnag, "After much Debate, they concluded unanimously that I was only *Replum Scalcath*, which is interpreted literally *Lusus Naturae*..." (II, iii), a modern editor demonstrates the potency of this literalness by glossing *Lusus Naturae* as a "a freak of nature"—now the literal translation of a literal translation. It almost goes without saying that the literal phrase "a freak of nature" is not transparent enough *not* to require glossing itself, and that the gloss would require its own gloss and so on until the resources of the lexicon had been exhausted. The literal cannot be regarded as the most basic level, the very type of the signified. It is instead the stuff of signifying, the proliferation of letters, of which meaning is a transient by-product. In this regard, Gulliver is a character in the literal sense, a man of letters. The hard and soft sounds of his name map the gateways of articulation, give us a sense of the texture through which the paths of significance must be broken. Where he goes and what he sees seem to grow out of his name: Lemuel Gulliver, Lilliput, Brobdingnag, Glumdalclitch, Lagado, Glubbdubdrib, Luggnagg, Struldbruggs.... Throughout there is the rhythm of dactyls and anapests, like the clatter of horses' hoofs, nagging evidence of a level of marking and articulation more persistent than sense.

"The Houyhnhnms," we are told, "have no Letters," but they are nothing but letters, the very principle of the unintelligible signifying temporarily repressed by a conventional pronunciation. "The whining of a horse, perhaps best pronounced, *Whin-num*," ventures an editor, indicating my pronunciation and perhaps yours as well, but we should not let this habit obscure the indecipherability of the marks. "When I offered to slacken my Pace, he would cry, Hhuun, Hhuun; I guessed his Meaning and gave him to understand, as well I could, that I was weary, and not able to walk faster; upon which he would stand awhile to let me rest" (IV, i). I am not arguing that "the English Orthography" (IV, i) is inadequate for recording the cries of horses (because that might imply that there was some accurate orthography), nor would I say nay to the reader who says he knows the equine sound to which Gulliver refers with "hhuun." On the contrary, I want to suggest the aptness of this orthography which, in the face of an unspeakable language, develops an unpronounceable script. As the history of criticism of the *Travels* shows, the meaning of Houyhnhnm words, either in themselves or in Gulliver's translation of them (and we must not forget that much of the narrative is a translation) is highly debatable. In the same way, whatever pronunciation we choose for the Houyhnhnm words represses a host of others. It is this repression which I have tried to indicate in this essay. This has been a difficult task since I believe there is nothing to repress: the *something* for which we might look, the signified of the text, the meaning of the text, is itself the invention of repression. What is repressed is a signifying that has no meaning other than what it is (for it is our being): the hydraulics of life and death which, like the coursing of blood through our veins, we learn not to hear.

Book Reviews

Subjective Criticism by David Bleich. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978. Pp. 309. $16.00.

Subjective Criticism, the approach to the literary experience that gives priority to the reader as the maker of literary meanings and values, has been steadily gaining currency in recent years, as traditional interpretive practices have appeared to lose their authority, and their practitioners some of their confidence. This mid-life crisis of the humanities, a crisis of flagging energies and declining enrollments, may be no better reflected than in the widespread stratagems of beleaguered academics to pep up their work by adopting revolutionary programs of research and analysis and declaring prior modes of study obsolete, even when, as is sometimes the case, the turnover in interpretations is so rapid that what is being discarded has scarcely even been heard of. Subjective Criticism is just one of many such stratagems and by no means the latest, and as promoted by David Bleich it has all the earmarks of the average interpretive revolution, freely announcing the bankruptcy of all received literary knowledge and even challenging the notion that worthwhile knowledge can be received at all. In Bleich's rendering, Subjective Criticism asks the critic to make a new start, to cast off the threadbare lendings of graduate school (usually a coat and tie), break the hammerlock of the exhaustive bibliography, and vanquish the authority of the past. It urges him to be born again.

That is no mean appeal nowadays; there is fun and occasional profit in rebirth, even where the accrued benefits add up to little more than a fresh approach to literature and a new audience for one's work—in this case departments of Education in search of new ways to dispel the doldrums of the classroom. For what Subjective Criticism offers as a day to day bonus to the teacher is a regime of classroom exercises designed to enliven discussion by unlocking the personal meaning of the literary experience, encouraging students and professors alike to pool their responses to the text and, as Bleich puts it, to negotiate a communal interpretation. All reports back from the Subjective classroom, at least from the teachers, would appear to be positive. It sounds like a lively place.

But David Bleich's book, *Subjective Criticism*, is anything but a book about the formation of interpretive communities through the pooling and negotiation of responses, for Bleich is stalking bigger game than the over-controlled classroom or the over-prepared lecture. In a series of breathtaking assertions about origins and transmission of learning, Bleich issues a challenge to nothing less than the whole tradition of rational empiricism upon which Western science is founded, and which even constitutes, as Bleich believes, the prevailing rules of cultural knowledge. The villain in Bleich's view of modern education—and he makes no bones about its villainy—is "objective" knowledge and its repressive connection to established religious authority. Bleich is quite serious about this. Citing Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* as his authority, Bleich holds current notions of "objectivity" that sustain modern scientific inquiry to be nothing more than disposable paradigms of experience that just happen to be around because they suit our current emotional needs and present levels of cultural development, or used to, at any rate, since objectivity is fast being discredited. In a word, Western culture has clung so tenaciously to the "objective" mode of inquiry because it has proven to be, until now, "adaptive." This objectivity has also been, in Bleich's view, hierarchical and coercive because institutionally bound up with religion. The origins of objectivity lie in religion and not, as some of us had mistakenly thought, in a renegade movement of secular empiricism that had gained currency during the Renaissance. As evidence of this collusion Bleich cites the community censorship hearing in which "objective" authorities in the field of literature play along with local priests and bigots in the suppression of dangerous books and threatening ideas.

Bleich bears down hard on this point, that "objectivity" (he never refers to rationalism or empiricism) is the instrument of religious authority, and he is quite prepared to call both science and religion to account as mutually reinforcing superstitions. Objectivity and moral authority, he insists, are in cahoots, though what modern science ever did for religion besides cooperate in the suppression of pornography he is not prepared to say. But, as he puts it, "The 'laws' of nature and God have the same origin and purpose as laws issued by kings or enacted by legislatures–to provide a stable framework for social functioning." *Subjective Criticism*, going far afield, unmasks the laws of nature as ideology, as organized epistemological fraud in the service of social harmony and special interests: the new clergy of science. Once this accusation is out, we can see where we're headed, for Bleich's revolutionism is nothing if not thoroughgoing: *Subjective Criticism* is a manifesto for the liberation of man from hard data.

This assault upon traditional science is crucial to Bleich because he holds science, or at least the public image of science as a body of universal laws based on irrefutable facts, responsible for the distortions of literary intelligence that crept into the classroom with I. A. Richards and the New Criticism, which he charges with being a surrender to "objectivism," turning the literary text into a definable object, whose internal laws and external circumstances can be pinned down and exhausted by modern techniques of analysis. Bleich's method of debunking "objectivity" is to turn the tables on such science by invoking the perspectivism of modern science, especially Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, which holds that the observer interferes with what is observed, introducing an element of uncertainty into his calculations, and Einstein's Relativity, which demonstrates that the positions, velocities, and masses of objects in relative motion, and even the flow of time, are illusions of viewpoint. This new science, Bleich tells us, conforms to the "subjective paradigm" by which we have now learned to experience life, and if subjectivity can so infiltrate the hardest core of the hard sciences, physics, what then can we say of the study of literature which has always been suspect of harboring subjective elements?

Thus, "To make a distinction between the interpretive and quantitative sciences for the purpose of assigning more or less authority to one of them is no longer possible, and the subjective paradigm suggests that knowledge in general comes from synthesized interpretations."

Under Bleich's version of the subject paradigm, small group processes and small group rationality are now the *sine qua non* of knowledge, and "if the community finds the explanation satisfactory for its own purposes, this alone is enough to render it adequate." Even mathematics, which we had supposed immune to cultural bias and social pressure, comes into focus as a group symbolization, subject to the needs and motives of the group: "When scientific explanation follows from the acceptance of a paradigm, this paradigm is constituted by a communal motive; mathematical formalism is an instrument of this motive. Mathematical systems resymbolize those experiences which the original belief in the paradigm has deemed 'presently adaptive to understand.'"

This idea that prevailing knowledge or paradigms of experience are merely adaptive conveniences has a vaguely Marxist ring to it, but one looks in vain for the systematic critique of "objectivity" and its relation to special interests that one usually finds in the Marxist analysis. For Bleich is no Marxist; he is far too suspicious of the very notion of reality to entertain a line of inquiry that stresses material conditions and forces. His subjective paradigm shares with Marxism only its rage against things as they are and the repressive authority that has a stake in them. That is, substituting "objectivity" for capitalism, Subjective Criticism shares with Marxism its rebellious myths but not its analytic methods, including its scrupulous attention to the "fact."

Indeed, Bleich's sweeping indictments of rational empiricism lead him into ridiculous positions, and his attempts to recruit post-relativistic science to the cause of the subjective paradigm are an insult to the intelligence. What could be more at variance with Bleich's "communal sufficiency" of knowledge or the idea that theories of reality are "motivated resymbolizations" than Relativity or Uncertainty which are, after all, rule-bound phenomena, predicted by theoretical considerations and confirmed by observations. Relativity theory, as Bleich knows well, offers precise rules by which the dilations of time and the increments of mass that affect a body moving at nearly the speed of light may be calculated, and the perspectivism that such calculations introduce into science is of a far different order than the "subjective paradigm" Bleich wants to promote as a norm of reading. Nor was there anything particularly subjective about the way the Newtonian universe was replaced by the Relativistic. Both Relativities, Special and General, gained acceptance by their capacity to explain known observations and predict new ones, and their ability to withstand the challenges of reason and evidence. They are not negotiated intersubjectivities let alone projected, symbolized motives. And while Bleich claims, through most of the book, to be following Thomas Kuhn in his insistence that knowledge is governed by paradigms, he also acknowledges his departure from Kuhn over the issue of empiricism, which Kuhn is not prepared to discard.

One would never guess from reading Bleich that scientists constitute international communities, and that the rules of evidence and canons of reason that obtain among physicists in Huntsville or Kharkov or Lop Nor are remarkably consistent, and that scientists in such places are apt to share similar views on the rest mass of the Lambda Plus particle or the rate of expansion of the Atlantic sea floor that owe nothing to Bleich's cherished schemes of subjectivity. Bleich is ignorant of how scientific hypotheses are made and verified because he does not care about such matters; he cares only about the rhetoric of revolutionary purpose that can be appropriated from theorists such as Kuhn and Roger Poole, and cavalierly dismisses any counter-proposals that science really might test reality as evidence of its deep connection with religion, a revelation of its patrimony of authority and superstition.

Of course, Bleich's style of playing fast and loose with science does not of itself invalidate his propositions about the subjectivity of the reading experiences, but it does reveal the book as a whole to be fundamentally a piece of mythmaking in which the subjective elements in reading, rather than being topics to be examined in all curiosity, are treated as principles of heroic resistance to be defended. Learning how the mind works is less to the point than freeing oneself from the dead hand of the past. Thus the distortions of science that follow from the book's ideology are, if anything, redoubled in Bleich's depiction of the New Criticism, whose "objectivity," with its myths of the objective text and its need for a hierarchy—really a hierophancy—of interpreters, priests of the imagination, has inhibited the free play of critical inquiry. Granting the element of truth in this—the well-known stringencies in the New Criticism that are everywhere acknowledged—one would still never guess from Bleich's tone that the New Criticism could have produced a William Empson or a *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, a book all about the hazards of categorical interpretation, or that concepts such as ambiguity, tension, paradox, and conflict lay at the very heart of certain New Critical vocabularies. For indeed, when you've enclosed yourself in a revolutionary myth that has to be defended at all costs, contradictory evidence threatens to blow the whole system sky-high, and how better to defend one's personal investment in illusion than to announce the advent of mythic thinking itself—that henceforth subjectivity shall reign, starting with one's own?

That is especially unfortunate because we have just begun to think about the dynamics of the classroom and how interpretation actually takes place. Subjective Criticism, informed as it is by psychoanalysis, would seem to offer one promising approach to some questions about the personal dimensions of interpretation. But first it has to be purged of its own heroic and self-aggrandizing mythologies, especially the parricidal myth of the repressiveness of all prior knowledge, which effectively cuts it off from the rich reserves of both science and literary criticism that it needs to carry out its task with any sophistication.

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Psychoanalysis, Creativity, and Literature: A French-American Inquiry, edited by Alan Roland. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978. Pp. viii + 368. $20.00.

Like the course of true love, the history of psychoanalysis never has run smooth. Neither, as a consequence, has the history of the relation between psychoanalysis and literary studies. The history of psychoanalysis could be narrated in its own language of development and defense: progressions involve regressions, positions so controversial at one time they lead to schisms re-surface later to claim ideological dominance by a kind of unacknowledged displacement of earlier stands. Controversies in theory become linked to idealized individual, group and national identities, so that they seem at once provincial and radically consequential. Yet, as in individual developments, a new sophistication may rather suddenly integrate what seemed permanently dis-unified, at least from one perspective. Any history of psychoanalysis must take into account the self-reflexive overdetermination of this artful science, the ways in which it is, like Shakespeare in Sonnet 111, "subdu'd/To what it works in, like the Dyers hand."

The identity of psychoanalysis is a psychoanalytic question which could be asked through *Psychoanalysis, Creativity and Literature.* This book collects seventeen essays that span a spectrum of styles of theoretical and applied psychoanalysis so broad that I can imagine a "decomposition" course based on it. Although billed as a "Franco-American Dialogue," the volume contains precious little actual dialogue among its various loosely gathered parts. It is more like the "corps morcelé" imagined by Jacques Lacan to portray the child not yet in possession of an image of its unity. Some essays seem to be transcripts of talks delivered at the 1976 symposia of which this book is the monument. Others seem (and some *are*) revised versions of work published elsewhere. Still others are fully polished work, clearly considered by the authors to be important "position" papers. But, to change the metaphor, the volume as a whole seems a Tower of Babel, not only because it gathers conceptual languages and ideological commitments from North America and the Continent, but because its many voices speak with too uneven degrees of articulated mastery of their chosen material, and the editorial work has been minimal. In the Biblical story God scattered the builders of Babel because they aspired to heaven. Here the process seems simply reversed: an international colloquy in which the speakers of different languages are merely collected, without enough of the deeper translation that could show their complex inter-relations.

But in fairness to Roland and his contributors, I should say that they move us closer to the possibility of this "deeper translation." The collection is also called an "inquiry," and even in the absence of adequate introductory integration of its contents, the contents themselves can be seen as a representative field of concepts and questions. To this extent, the volume offers something of an antidote to the pessimistic summary of our contemporary situation spoken by J. B. Pontalis: "...closed lingos that no longer refer to anything but themselves: there is an exchange, but only with another which is the same as one-self—prevalence of endogamy." At least in the past, "inquiries" did lead to more intimate, exogamous arrangements.

The volume as a whole represents the fields of theoretical and applied psychoanalysis in a process of metamorphic change which belies schematic description. Certainly no simple idea of "scientific progress" can be claimed to comprehend the entire process, although the rhetoric of scientific discovery and development does characterize some essays. The "American" authors, unsurprisingly, stay closer to applied science objectifications of their interpretive activity than the "French." Thus Norman Holland represents identity theory–the general idea that we re-create some central theme of our being in all our interactions, literary or not–as a "third phase" of psychoanalysis, superceding the dualities of conscious vs. unconscious and ego vs. non-ego, the very dualities that govern other essays in the volume. Ernest S. Wolf uses Sartre's and Kafka's fictions to illustrate the new theory of narcissism developed by Heinz Kohut. Albert Rothenberg claims to have discovered the structure of creative thinking by empirical means. Hereafter, Janusian and Homospatial thinking, concepts arrived at through "research observations" and "controlled experiments" can replace such noble precursors as Yin and Yang, Dionysian and Apollonian. These "Americans" (and others could be added) are eager for priority, for the mastery that derives from new theoretical techology, even when they are aware, as Holland surely is, that their theoretical positions extrapolate their own identities, or, as Wolf is, that their "newness" re-states a relation between empathy and "objectivity" as old as psychoanalysis.

There is, however, no uniformity among the "Americans." We even have a marginally psychoanalytic piece by Kenneth Burke, who is *sui generis*. The Rankian and Eriksonian contributions have a closer affinity with religious wishes for wholeness and devotion than with the styles of their more positivist companions. Thus Margaret Brenman-Gibson can interpret Clifford Odets' painful fantasy of being eaten by his audience as "integrating the contraries, including feminine and masculine identity elements." Such Eriksonian idealization allies her contribution with that of Roland and Rizzo, who adopt the language of "meaningful relations" and "self-realization" in their search for Pirandello. What these "Americans" lack, it seems to me, is the self-conscious irony that enlivens some of the "French," the irony that would lead them to see through the more vacuous expressions of therapeutic wishfulness. Compare André Green, for whom the work of art "opts for life's illusory clamor, as against the certainty of death."

Indeed, one of the distinguishing marks of the "French" challenge to the more sunny-minded versions of psychoanalysis generated by "American" writers is just this return to and preoccupation with Freud's "death-drive." The "French" infatuation with psychoanalysis during the past ten years–lucidly recounted in its sociological dimension by Sherry Turkle in this volume–involves a deep alliance with the Freud of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, a text which is made to support two central tenets: that Desire (commonly so personified) is to be understood as an endless process of subsititutive actions and "object-choices," a process in which every significant choice is also an announcement of loss (the presence of "death" in psychic mobility); and that, in the words of François Peraldi's contribution, "The ego is that part of the subject manufactured through a series of alienating identifications." Whatever else one might say of the cult of Lacan in Paris, these two tenets have carried over into much less obscurantist styles than his, and, once we jettison his half-formed linguistics based on Saussure, we have in them a challenge to "American" ideologies that derive from Heinz Hartmann's ego psychology. What is "alienating" about identifications in the "French" view, is the way in which they lead us to confuse historical realities with reality itself. And what is implied in the concept of mobile desire is that all attempts at closure of meaning mask motives to dominate their object. Understood in this way, the "French" stance turns out to have some unsuspected affinities with the kinds of open readings derived from ever-changing relationships which Norman Holland represents in theory and practice. Self and other each become relational, historical transforms of one another. (The difference, however, is crucial. For Holland there is no subject beyond the identity principle. For the "French" view derived from Lacan, the subject must exist, somehow beyond his reflection in image and word, or he would not be there to become "alienated.")

But it would be much of a mistake to equate the "French" contributions to this book with Lacan as it would to equate the "American" with one of its patriarchs. There are, if anything, even more splits in Paris than in other schools of theory. One can hear criticism of prevailing dogma in most of the "French" essays. Julien Bigras voices what seems to me the most telling limitation of his Parisian training:

> Coupled with the awesome emphasis placed on theory, intellectualism was particularly manifest whenever the student-analyst had to discuss a patient's case. In fact he was often incapable of doing so: the patient was often little more than a pretext for performing what might be called theoretical gymnastics.

What is implied here is that the theoretical apparatus, whatever its internal merits and confusions, comes to defend against feelings and to prevent the experience of relationships between people. What could be less psychoanalytic! If the "American" fault is an overcommitment to experiences of synthesis and integration, the "French" counterpart seems to be a hypercathexis of theory itself.

But the opposition of "French" and "American" has its limits, which is why I have kept them in quotes. This book is both a symptom of and a contribution to the inter-penetration of styles that is coming to characterize psychoanalytic writing. On the theoretical level, we are beginning to see effects of the French in American writing (even in the "official" journals), and we are hearing of Margaret Mahler, René Spitz, even Otto Kernberg in French training. On the level of writing, we are beginning to see that the articulation of theory is itself a "literary" activity, involving a "languaging" of experience as complex in its potential effects and ambiguities as the language it has traditionally taken as its object of analysis. The French have been especially challenging in this respect, which may be one reason why, for all his obscurity and tricksterism, Lacan continues to appeal to literary critics.

Three essays in *Psychoanalysis, Creativity and Literature* seem best representatives of this inter-penetration of languages. Norman Holland's "Literary Interpretation and Three Phases of Psychoanalysis" brings the question of psychoanalytic language into historical focus and opens the possibilities of psychoanalytic interpretation to individual style. André Green's "The Double and the Absent" shows the kind of mastery that transcends notions of "applied" psychoanalysis. At once psychoanalytic and literary, his essay brings an eloquence of writing to a deep understanding of the place of writing and reading in the larger cultural space of shared experience. René Girard also exemplifies the mutuality that can derive from giving psychoanalysis and literature equal rights. In "Narcissism: The Freudian Myth Demythified by Proust," he reads Proust's representation of the mirage of narcissistic self-sufficiency to show that Proust understood what Freud acts out in his theory of narcissism. Girard also offers a jargonless expression of the possible future for literature and psychoanalysis:

> Between the intuitions and limitations of psychoanalytical theory on the one hand, and of great literature on the other, there is a gap that we must bridge. Literature and psychoanalysis in the best sense need *each other*. My intention is not to build up Proust against Freud, or even less "literature" against "psychoanalysis," but to facilitate a dialogue between the two, a dialogue of equals that has never occurred so far, and through the fault of literary critics, really, as much as of psychoanalysts.

There are signs, then, that the Tower of Babel houses common places as well as closed lingos. The work of deeper translation has begun.

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Change and Decline: Roman Literature in the Early Empire by Gordon Williams. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978. Pp. vi + 344. $12.50.

The issue Williams tackles here ought to be of fundamental interest not just for classical studies but for literary criticism in general: just how (if at all) can we evaluate and understand decline in a culture's literary tradition? Specifically, his focus is "Silver Age" Latin literature (spanning roughly the first two centuries A.D.). Because many of the writers of this age influenced European authors from the Renaissance on, this book should gain wide interest with nonclassicists. Unfortunately, its shortcomings seriously mar its contribution.

The major fault, which subsumes the work's other deficiencies, is one that bedevils most classical philology and threatens to make it a solipistic science, the failure to come to grips with, much less utilize, modern critical methodologies. Likewise, Williams fails to articulate or justify what methodology he himself will use, although it soon becomes apparent. It is old style philology, where numerous texts are culled, collected, arranged, and juxtaposed, where verbal, stylistic, thematic similarities (and dissimilarities), all based, it turns out, on the categories of classical rhetoric, are noticed, toted up, and appreciated. But such cumulations are not illuminating. The reason is clear: texts do not talk to texts. Works of literature manifest complex interactions between author and text, between author and his real or imagined audience, between author and his culture; they strive to mediate personal, social, and thus inevitably cultural contradictions. While it is apparent Williams feels these issues, he skirts them, and his analysis focuses on artificial formalistic aspects of the putative decline, without coming to grips with the untidy, but very revealing, disruptions between literary paradigms and the discrepant realities they no longer effectively control. Indeed, the inadequacy of Williams's outmoded technique is its very refutation, the poverty of insights it brings to its subject matter and the questions it leaves unanswered. Thus, Williams's conclusions are uninformative, though predictable, shibboleths: Roman literature declined because of pessimism in a decadent culture, escapism, retreat from reality, the increasing dominance of Greek culture, archaism, failure of intellectual nerve, and the changed conception of the function of literature (e. g., *imitatio* and *aemulatio*). Even if these were valid or useful assessments, they would not be explanations of literary decline, but manifestations. What we would really want to know is what lay behind these alleged phenomena. But locked into outworn and sterile critical modes and valuations, Williams lacks a *pou sto*, an external intellectual fulcrum from which to lever his material.

Regrettable too is Williams's unwillingness seriously to examine, except in a dismissive preterition, the issue central to the book's thesis: whether Roman literature really was in decline at all in the first two centuries A. D., indeed, whether we can legitimately speak of literary decline in any significant or fruitful way. Williams does acknowledge with some discomfort that this might be an issue, noting some critics have recently become increasingly favorable in their judgment of Silver Age Latin literature. But seeing a sinister coincidence of our contemporary tastes and standards with those of the decadent age under scrutiny, he decries this critical stance as "subjective" and worries, "Has literary history any value under such conditions? Is it even possible?" (p. 1). Obviously not for Williams, who biases his discussion with the old Roman notion, so prevalent in the Silver Age itself, that literary and political decline are results of moral decline.

Finally, it is significant that this work really dwells most on poetry (Williams's métier), while prose is treated (except for Tacitus' gelid *Dialogus*) in desultory fashion, a serious debility, given the work's ambitious aim. Strikingly, while Lucan, Statius, and Ovid are given great attention, Petronius languishes, quoted only once, and then just to instance Eumolpus' *declamatio* on the decadence of the age (pp. 11-12). What is there about the *Satyrikon*—rich, varied, restless—that merits this silence? One answer may be that Petronius' text probes too deeply—and disturbingly—into the profound cultural inconsistencies of Roman imperial life and literature. To confront this text would mean jarring the tidy, formalistic explanation of Roman literary decline Williams sets forth. In sum, while Williams's book is a sincere and erudite effort, its lack of a feasible critical method both stymies its author's investigations, making him avoid the crucial issues or offer superficial explanations, and thus frustrates his readers.

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The Song of Roland: An Analytical Edition (2 vols.) by Gerard J. Brault. University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978. Pp. xviii + 574; vi + 282. $20.00; $12.00.

Gerard J. Brault's two volume analytical edition of *The Song of Roland* is an ambitious project handsomely executed. Volume I consists of a substantial introduction covering matters historical, exegetical, textual, and literary, followed by a laisse-by-laisse commentary on the poem. Both the Introduction and Commentary are copiously annotated; the volume concludes with a bibliography, a well-conceived index and an attractive series of illustrative plates. Volume II is Brault's edition of the Oxford *Song of Roland*, accompanied by a facing English translation. As the editor adopts a fairly conservative approach to the text, introducing emendations only where they are generally sanctioned by previous editors or necessitated by obvious scribal error, the notes to the manuscript are fairly brief. The notes to the text and translation are more extensive.

Volume II—the edition proper—is a treat. Although Brault notes that "This book is chiefly intended for medievalists," his text is as well-suited to the student as to the scholar. It is a remarkably clean text, as Brault has wisely chosen not to clutter the page with footnote numbers or typographical indications of emendations. The translation is also an asset; facing lines correspond exactly, and Brault has deliberately eschewed "any attempt to capture the flavor of the original" in order to "render each word and phrase accurately." Where this editor's laisse and line numbering differ from those in previous editions, conventional numbering is enclosed in brackets.

It is obvious from the extent of his annotation that Brault's project has been exhaustively researched: nearly one third of the first volume is devoted to notes (there are 615 footnotes on the 111-page introduction alone), and in both volumes the annotation, rich and scrupulously cross-referenced, encompasses a vast range of material. Ironically, however, the virtues of the annotation—its comprehensiveness and scrupulosity—become major weaknesses in the expository sections, the Introduction and Commentary. Quite simply, Brault has tried to do too much. In the Foreword he announces that he has intentionally adopted an eclectic method of analysis, a method which the book-jacket praises (not inaccurately) as "often little short of encyclopedic." Unfortunately, the eclectic and the encyclopedic conspire against Brault's objective of providing "a systematic literary analysis of the entire poem," for eclecticism emerges here rather as a lack of method, in which the mixed methodologies remain uncomfortably dissociated, while the encyclopedic impulse, the evident desire to leave no stone unturned, ultimately defies system, and thus cannot provide a coherent approach to the poem.

Commentary 19, on laisses 133-135, will serve as illustration. These three laisses describe Roland's sounding the oliphant, and the varying responses of the distant listeners in Charlemagne's entourage, climaxing in their recognition of Roland's distress. Brault's admittedly learned commentary takes us far afield. In the first six relatively brief paragraphs, he covers modern responses to the passage, the horn as a medieval hunting instrument, images of horn-blowers and archers in Romanesque bas-relief and sculpture, theological implications of the hunting metaphor, associations of a horn with the supernatural in medieval secular literature, the recent arrival in France of carved elephant-tusk horns, and possible evocation, through the horn's call, of Psalm 130, and hence of the Last Judgment. Following these observations, during the course of which the commentator has alluded to Alfred de Vigny, the Andlau sculptor, Chrétien de Troyes, Robert Biket, *Huon de Bordeaux* and the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, is a three-page excursus on a crux in the Oxford manuscript (Ganelon's odd reference to Roland's flooding the field in the "conquest of Noples"), the discussion proceeding from the manuscript traditions through the washing-of-blood as a folk-motif in the *Tristan*, Chrétien and Shakespeare, to the motif's allegorical significance in Prudentius. Finally, Roland's having remained unwounded to this moment suggests to the commentator another association with the supernatural, and his speculation that a wound such as Roland's would probably result in prolonged agony leads to the conclusion that Roland's suffering "accentuates the parallel with the Passion of Our Lord." If there is a theme, a stance, a reading here, it remains obscure.

And it seems that the farther Brault is from the immediate text, the less controlled his flow of information becomes, for the somewhat patchwork nature of the Commentary, the air of free-association, is magnified in the Introduction which, divided into twenty-one separate sections, is structurally paratactic and baldly undersynthesized. Classification at all levels seems arbitrary at best. Why, for example, should the section entitled "Landscape" (# 16, essentially symbolic topography) have equal status with such broad topics as "The Church and the Arts," or "The Meaning of the *Song of Roland*"? Why, for that matter, isn't natural symbolic topography classified with man-made symbolic topography such as "The Road," or "The Two Cities," which appear under the rather puzzling heading of "Metaphorical Consistency" (#15)? Why, in fact, aren't all types of symbolism included under one head? "Number Symbolism" turns up in "Narrative Devices and Techniques" (#18), as does a sub-section on "Geometricism," which is surely an aspect of "Structure" (#13). The encyclopedic impulse intrudes here too; I can find no rationale, other than a desire for ultimate comprehensiveness, for the inclusion of such sections as the grandiosely—and misleadingly—titled "Ambiguity and Logic" (# 9), which consists of two, brief, truistic paragraphs stating that, like all poetry, *Roland* employs the "metaphorical mode," and that thus "one must at times put aside twentieth-century notions of what constitutes logic or common sense." Audience, as well as order, is lost in the shuffle.

What we really have in the Introduction and Commentary is annotation masquerading as exposition, notes without numbers. But the flaws of Volume I are perhaps the inevitable result of what is, after all, a praiseworthy ambition, an ambition satisfyingly realized in other aspects of the work, and they should not, in the end, obscure the genuine value of Brault's undertaking. One cannot be all things to all readers, and if Brault's strengths do not lie in exposition or synthesis, his exemplary text and the rich range of information he makes accessible in both volumes should earn the gratitude of students and scholars for years to come.

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Rhetorical Norms in Renaissance Literature by William J. Kennedy. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978. Pp. vii + 229. $13.50.

Kennedy has two interests. One is in the rhetorical approach to discourse as a corrective to and expansion of currently fashionable verbal analyses, the other is in the literary history of the Renaissance. As a theoretician, he places his rhetorical interest in a context of linguistics, structuralism, and hermenleutics. As a practical critic and historian, he discusses in some detail nine major pieces of Renaissance literature, from Petrarch to Milton, with reference to a host of their contemporary Latin and vernacular works. Throughout he invites a view of the comparative advantages of rhetorical attitudes and offers a conclusion that, tonally at least, makes explicit his intention to have written something of a polemic.

The effectiveness of the polemic, if it is that, will have to be determined by someone who is not already, like the present reviewer, a partisan of the rhetorical approaches. Most rhetoricians will find Kennedy articulating forcibly a position which we already hold. I do not mean to imply that rhetoricians will not profit from reading this book; on the contrary, we—and, for that matter, all students of the Renaissance—will find this work illuminating and richly suggestive. But we are not among the theoreticians in Kennedy's audience. They are, rather, the students of de Saussure, Barthes, Jakobson, not to mention Hirsch, Gadamer, Derrida, Greimas, Todorov. In fact, so skillfully does the introductory chapter set up Kennedy's study that a rhetorician is likely to pass from it to the remainder of the book fearing that he will find therein only formalism (or structuralism or any other objectivism) in a new guise.

But that is not the case. No approach deserves to be called rhetorical, Kennedy well realizes, unless it keeps at the center of its concerns the complex interactions of a speaker and an audience. Thus, the real source of the "norms" Kennedy discusses are "voice" and "address." These are at the center of his explorations of "mode," "style," and "genre," a critical triad dear to the hearts of the theoreticians in his audience. Each part of this triad is given a section of the book.

"The Petrarchan Mode in Lyric Poetry" is the first major section of Kennedy's practical criticism. In it, *ethos* and *pathos* emerge as the two chief terms of his critical operations, the former naming the audience's perception of the speaker, the latter the speaker's efforts to control his audience's response. The Petrarchan mode, Kennedy argues, requires a perceptible split between the poet and his speaker, and a correlative split between a fictive and an actual audience. Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, Ronsard's *Les Amours*, and Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* are the major works discussed in this mode. So arranged, the works not only present developments in rhetorical norms of Renaissance Petrarchism but also offer a kind of history designed to illustrate Kennedy's claim "that strategies of voice and address characterize the mode better than elocutionary figures and other verbal devices do" (p. 71).

"Irony" is the major stylistic quality which Kennedy examines in—again, arranged in historical order—Erasmus's *The Praise of Folly*, Thomas More's *Utopia*, and Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, with most attention paid to the last work. But it becomes apparent that "style," like "mode," names no real part of Kennedy's concern. "Irony" is, obviously, a stylistic quality, and most readers would agree that the word defines the styles of the three pieces examined. But Kennedy's examination continually veers away from *elocutio* and toward speakers and audiences, in order that his discussion of these pieces may show "the impossibility of understanding a text through its verbal strategies alone and . . . the need for coming to terms with the characterization of the speaker and his relationship with the audience" (p. 105).

Like "style," "genre" becomes a subject which allows Kennedy to group certain major works in the Renaissance and, more importantly, to offer a critique of certain fashionable approaches. However "genre" is singular among the triad of critical terms Kennedy uses to structure his work, for it is one he would most seek to preserve, reform, and continue to use. He would do that by giving it a flexibility that it lacks in modern theory. He concentrates on the epic genre, in particular Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, D'Aubigné's *Les Tragiques*, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. His ultimate view of that genre is one encompassing "an inspired speaker who is at once an audience of the action that he describes and a mediator between that action and his own audience" (p. 187). Thus, concepts of genre, he attempts to show, achieve flexibility by approaches through *ethos* and *pathos*.

Obviously, in so short a book the author cannot offer detailed analyses of individual pieces. This is perhaps nowhere more noticeable than in his rapid course through the epics. But if his sweep is broad, his stated intention is to be suggestive, to encourage further work. Moreover, as noted, it is quite apparent that his primary role is that of a critic of critics, one dissatisfied with current approaches, a stance made explicit several times and reiterated in the conclusion, part of which is "aimed against certain deconstructive tendencies to flatten out literature and literary history to the play of defined verbal antinomies" (p. 191).

Kennedy's work should have appeal for these critics, these non-partisan readers who are not yet convinced of the value of rhetorical attitudes toward discourse. Attracted by an evident concern with "norms" and with a familiar critical triad, they will be drawn into a case that challenges their very assumptions about how literary language works. It may be that some will find Kennedy's case a litle too easily confirmable, for who can doubt the rhetorical nature of Renaissance literature? And "genre" as defined seems unquestionably useful in discussions of epic. Then, too, no one likes to have his territory threatened. Even the partisans, the rhetoricians, may wish *their* territory had been given a little more recognition through at least a clearer use of the history of rhetorical theory. Nonetheless, the breadth of Kennedy's reading and the depth of his knowledge of literary history lend a cogency to his argument which should be difficult for anyone to resist or gainsay.

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THOMAS O. SLOANE

Whatever Happened to Shakespeare? by Kenneth McClellan. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1978. Pp. 230. $18.50.

Kenneth McClellan utilizes his experience as director and actor (in over a hundred Shakespearean roles) in his lively description of the state of Shakespeare on the historical and contemporary stage. While his account is neither as scholarly nor as focused as, for example, Hazelton Spencer's *Shakespeare Improved*, which deals with Shakespearean adaptations on the Restoration stage, McClellan ambitiously wades through three centuries of productions, setting aside fewer than fifteen pages for translation and twelve for films. It is only "with some reluctance," he adds, that he has "set aside the many operas based on plays of Shakespeare . . . ."

Nor does Mr. McClellan pretend to the objectivity of a scholarly Spencer. He dismisses without hesitation Dryden's *All for Love* ("a debasement of Shakespeare rather than an original work"), Oliver, Orson Welles, Zeferelli, Guthrie, Laughton, and especially Peter Brook. In a postscript characteristic of his style, he remarks that "the world will little note nor long remember the attempts of Messrs. Bond, Ionesco and Osborne to write better plays than Shakespeare on the subjects of Lear, Macbeth and Coriolanus."

Noting flaws in Mr. McClellan's own study would be too simple to do. One upset, for example, with his summary dismissal of Ernest Jones' Freudian views of Hamlet and Othello, need point only to McClellan's amateurish psychoanalysis of the directorial and designing methods of Gordon Craig: "The son of Ellen Terry by the designer E. W. Godwin, the real father-figure in his life was his mother's stage partner and off-stage lover Henry Irving." Continuing his "analysis" to explain once again what has happened to Shakespeare, McClellan adds, "As time went on, Craig sought to dethrone the dramatist even more fiercely than he had once sought to diminish the actor. Shakespeare replaced Irving as his Laius-figure."

The book's chief flaw, it seems to me, is the unrelenting nature of McClellan's message as to what has happened to Shakespeare. From the very title to the final chapter, we are told that Shakespeare should always be pure—ungimmicky and even uncut. He never pauses long enough to ask if a production containing all the lines of the second quarto and First Folio of *Hamlet*, for example, was ever played or meant to be.

Still the work is worth reading and for more than its witty phrasing. McClellan's encyclopedic memory for the details of Shakespearean productions are as amusing as they are worthy of record. His memory of productions spans many years—from the all male and all female *As You Like It*; from the "inevitable" *Troilus and Cressida* with men playing women and the women, men; to the motif of endless bicycles in modern dress Shakespearean productions! It is for the recounting of hundreds of these production-oriented details that we owe most to Mr. McClellan's work.

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Dickens and Reality by John Romano. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978. Pp. 187. $12.00.

George Eliot & The Novel of Vocation by Alan Mintz. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1978. Pp. xi + 193. $11.00.

Anthony Trollope by Arthur Pollard. London: Henley and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978. Pp. 208. $12.75.

One might call this review "Pictures at an Exhibition," for terms from the art world suggest themselves to describe each work under consideration. Romano's study of Dickens is a small yet masterly "canvas," shot through, however, with touches of sfumato. Mintz's work calls to mind an Escher graphic (or Gestalt optical puzzle): in his study what we think of as background and foreground collide and seem to reverse places. And Pollard's study could be likened to nothing better than a William Frith painting, immediately recognizable and pretending to be no more than it is, for his author-guide to Trollope is filled with a veritable Derby-Day crowd of Trollopian characters—and novels!

John Romano's *Dickens and Reality* is an intriguing, ambitious attempt to define that uneasy relation between the imaginary and real worlds by focusing on the nature of "realist" form, the implications of that form for Dickens' themes and characterization, the role of free play in Dickens' language, the function of sentimentality with respect to aesthetics in *Oliver Twist* (a "social protest" novel), and the function of *Dombey and Son* as Dickens' "novel of reality"—his standard form, according to Romano. In each chapter Romano selects crucial passages from the novels and submits these to a finely-tuned search for paradigms of Dickens' form. Almost the first half of his study focuses on *Our Mutual Friend*, but attention is also devoted to *Little Dorrit*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and of course *Oliver Twist* and *Dombey and Son*. Romano's argument that Dickens creates "open form" is in itself familiar. But he goes one step further: Dickens' form is open because it opens onto, signals, and thus forever reminds us of the larger world of which he and his readers are a part.

Romano takes on a galaxy of stellar critics (from Ian Watt to J. Hillis Miller) who would disqualify Dickens from realism because his fantastic characters like Quilp or Jenny Wren contravene verisimilitude (i. e., "normal," everyday details), or because the world of Dickens' novels is wholly self-contained, reflexive, nonreferential. Romano's realist necessarily sees the artificiality of form. The solution is a subterfuge of form even as the novelist uses it to achieve "open form," which "acknowledge[s] fully that which lies beyond itself, and is greater than itself, and inclusive of itself" (p. 50). Thus the Veneerings' reflecting mirror in *Our Mutual Friend* (Ch. 2) is an ancient symbol of mimesis; but Dickens uses it not to acclaim but to controvert the authority of mimesis. If the mirror can richly reflect all the surface details of the Veneering gathering, it cannot image forth anything outside its limited purview—particularly Charlie Hexam and his world (the lower world) which break in upon the party and bring the news that begins the novel's real story. And just as Charlie's intrusion disrupts the sense of inclusiveness and coherence which the "world" reflected in the mirror had seemed to give us, so Dickens, after narrowing down the world to encompass it within form, "punctures," transgresses against, that form to show the inherent impossibility of enclosing the outer world within the limits of form at all.

Romano also discovers paradigms of art in Dickens' themes and characterization. The river and its duples (mud, sweat, blood) in *Our Mutual Friend* represent a "primary reality," that which cannot ever be fully comprehended but has to do with the origins of life, the life force. Bradley Headstone works to deny his origins by rigidly imposing a surface form on his behavior and appearance, only to have this primary reality erupt and destroy him. Lizzie Hexam, however, is able to make predictions and see her "pictures" in the fire (obvious examples of patterning and form) only because she, unlike Bradley, has stayed close to and acknowledges her origins, the river. That is, only because she is committed to, aware of, the relatedness of past, present, and future can she make her predictions at all. Two conclusions are to be drawn: 1) if Dickens saw with Bradley how dangerous and distorting it was to subordinate instincts, origins, and personal truths to a rigid, artificial surface, he would hardly nail down all details in his work within a seamlessly coherent form; 2) thus Dickens' form "confesses," like Lizzie, its dependence on and relation to something larger than itself. "That is so because the excluded is precisely the locus of the larger, essential or primary reality on which the contents are dependent for their own reality.... It is recognition of this dependence, rather than verisimilitude, that constitutes the realism of the artistic whole" (p. 76).

Romano also explores the role of free play in Dickens' language to illustrate his distinctive realism. If Romano sides with Marcus and Hillis Miller in recognizing this free play, he differs from them in arguing that it exists side by side with obviously referential language. Thus Clennam's meditation in concert with the Sunday bells he hears in "Home" (*Little Dorrit*) is constructed with language that is simultaneously determined, referential, and shot through with free play. His word game is determined by the rhythm of the bells and by their associated meaning, which is grim and stultifying. Yet Clennam continues filling in words to the rhythm of the bells after they cease ringing, and the game and his playful tone are at odds with the prevailing oppressive atmosphere. Dickens, too, sets up predetermined linguistic patterns in his prose, as through strongly rhythmic parallelism. But if he "fills in with words a 'pre-existing' rhythmic pattern, as Clennam fills in the strokes of the bell" (p. 104), there is also in his language a "distinct inappropriateness of tone" for "the language of the humorless depiction of the dismal city or the angry sarcasm toward its lawmakers, or the language, which follows, of the gloomy meditation on past Sundays. The reader will feel that a linguistic idea attractive and pleasing in itself is being indulged here..." (p. 105). On one hand, then, Dickens' linguistic play is a means of liberating language from what would otherwise be oppressive form or context; and this delight in language for its own sake is the affirmative counterpart to the negative deconstructionist ethos in his realist aesthetic. On the other hand, the disparity in his work between tone and meaning, between reflexive and referential language, punctures the coherence of the text and once again throws us out upon and heightens our response to the actual.

There is not sufficient room to summarize the rest of Romano's argument; I can merely assert that it is a complex, subtle, and closely-knit one. But there is that sfumato, that obscuring smoke or fog, I mentioned earlier. The most troublesome obfuscation is Romano's use of the term "reality" itself. Possibly, in refusing to define the word's precise meaning, Romano is attempting with his audience what he feels Dickens did with his—through cracks and rents in his text to throw the reader back out upon that larger world, whatever it may be. And no doubt, as Romano himself avers, reality can never be adequately defined or comprehended. Still, one is uneasy with the shifts in Romano's terminology. At the outset, "reality" is a formless "sprawl" incapable of being reduced to or contained within the limits of form. With his discussion of Lizzie Hexam, reality suddenly becomes related to continuity, a pattern or form that even implies cause/effect relationships. Finally, in his discussion of *Oliver Twist*, reality is equated with a kind of radical freedom: Oliver's character is "shadowy" and vague because Dickens is reluctant to confine the innate freedom and mysteriousness of good within the limits of overdetermined language. And this final shift raises additional questions. Is not Quilp, too, an essentially "shadowy" figure, incapable of being apprehended in terms of verisimilitude? Is evil, then, not free or mysterious in the same way that good, embodied in Oliver, is? If so, why do Dickens' villains strike us as so much more forceful, so much less insubstantial, than his heroes?

One misses, also, a discussion of the *value* of form. That is, if Dickens' fidelity is to reality above all else, and if reality cannot by definition be contained within fiction, why are we given fiction at all? Surely part of the answer lies in Dickens' devout belief that imagination is very real indeed. But what is the imagination? Is it only a means of perception, as with Paul Dombey, or is it, a la Coleridge, a shaping force? The dilemma intensifies in Romano's discussion of *Oliver Twist*. If, on one hand, Dickens is celebrating the freedom of the real, and if, on the other hand, he forces the "philosophical'' reader through rhetoric and design to see truth, does this mean Dickens denies to the reader the same freedom and release from design he insists on in his language, novels, and reality itself?

But sfumato, if it obscures, also means, in painting, "filled with points of light"—most apt for *Dickens and Reality*, which is very much worth having. Romano's prose is incisive and witty; his textual notes, index, and bibliography are most useful; and his is a qualification so necessary to a sensitive critic: a genuine love for his subject. Moreover, by positing both coherence and deconstruction within Dickens' texts, Romano's argument is more complex than those which opt merely for one or the other. Romano returns to us both the Dickens profoundly concerned with his world and the Dickens consciously refining his art. He also returns *us* to that perhaps unfathomable mystery of the elusive boundaries between the real and the imaginative. That boundary is still a Sphinx—Romano has not entirely unravelled the riddle—but neither is he, unlike some challengers, devoured.

The thesis of Alan Mintz's *George Eliot & The Novel of Vocation* is that *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* not only reflect the nineteenth-century obsession with work but in fact turn on the dilemmas and possibilities of vocation and hence inaugurate a new genre: the novel of vocation. This new development, argues Mintz, resulted from the century's secularization of the old Protestant ethic, wherein vocation was a spiritual "calling" integral to man's salvation. Eliot, of course, was exposed to this ethic through her Evangelical background, but in her novels she purges vocation of its dogmatism and substitutes "intellectual passion" for a heavenly call while retaining vocation's spiritual significance. Thus, to err in one's choice of vocation, as Farebrother knows from the beginning, or to fail in one's vocation, as Lydgate discovers, is wellnigh to lose one's soul. The potential of vocation, conversely, is its ability simultaneously to satisfy ambition (or egoism) and benevolence (service to society).

All this is reasonable enough. Whence my objection, my Escher or Gestalt motif? In insisting that all in *Middlemarch* revolves around vocation, Mintz confounds foreground and background. To assert that *Middlemarch* is "principally concerned with the problems of middle-class work" (p. 6) is akin to saying that Austen's novels are principally concerned with marriage. These statements are true in a sense. But as W. J. Harvey (who, significantly, is not cited by Mintz) has observed, "the theme of vocation in *Middlemarch* . . . is clearly central and yet it is not the theme as such that makes its impact. . . . In fact, [it] is a lowest common denominator, a reduction we make purely for convenience–from a number of very different histories" (*The Art of George Eliot*, 1963, pp. 153-54). Thus Mintz can allot little space to Dorothea. True, he places her at the "symbolic center" of the novel: as a woman, she has no direct access to vocation and thus illustrates the extreme pressures the community can exert on vocational choice. But what he sees as irony, namely, that this character at the "symbolic" center "has no profession whatsoever" (p. 60), surely suggests that he is imposing the wrong framework on the novel. Again, Mintz is bemused by Eliot's solution to Will Ladislaw's dilemma of "vocational decision": after trying art, politics, and journalism, he is finally rescued through marriage to Dorothea, i. e., through "the older means of occupational assistance: the patronage system" (p. 132). If Eliot's intent is a dissection of nineteenth-century vocation we should indeed be puzzled. But if we turn to Eliot as moralist the jarring note disappears: there is a lovely poetic justice in Dorothea's giving Will a living, for if it were not for Bulstrode's machinations, Will would have had this living all along. Finally, Mintz's argument that Eliot's vocational focus demanded a new mode of characterization, a technique "capable of a finer concentration on the gradual changes that mark the movement from one stage of life to another" (p. 56) could surely be explained by other means. Is not Eliot's characterization part of what one might term the literature of *process*, with its roots in Austen and its culmination in Henry James? One could quibble with other faults–Mintz's tendency not to provide transitions or clear connections between passages–but one, though minor, is inexcusable: the well-known Harriet Taylor Mill, wife of John Stuart Mill, is *thrice* called "Helen"–Mill's step-daughter! (pp. 50-51).

This is not to say that Mintz's work is without merit. Ironically, it is as a thorough study of the *background* of Eliot's novels that his work is chiefly valuable. He provides sound discussions of nineteenth-century autobiographies centered on vocation, of nineteenth-century medicine, and of Eliot's sources for her vocational theme. As well, Mintz's literary analysis is often perceptive. He notes, for example, that characters' vocational success may be assessed by measuring the text *they* produce (Lydgate's miniscule treatise on gout, Casaubon's fragments) against the one the narrator produces, and the chapter devoted to Lydgate and Frabrother (Ch. 4) is especially fine. Thus Mintz's work is worth examining, not only for his discussion of *Middlemarch* and its background but for the shorter sections devoted to *Daniel Deronda* and to Beatrice Webb and James Joyce. But, to borrow from Francis Bacon, I would recommend tasting, not swallowing.

Arthur Pollard's *Anthony Trollope* does not give us a "new" Trollope, but that is not Pollard's intent: his work is "an author-guide, going systematically through Trollope's voluminous output, omitting only the ephemera" (p. ix). As that "output" includes 47 novels, 5 collections of short stories, 4 biographical studies, 4 major travels books, 2 plays, and numerous sketches, Pollard's surveying it all in approximately 200 pages is no small feat. I do not think Prof. Pollard would object to my terming this book journeyman work; and if at times his prose lapses into the pedestrian, as if groaning under the burden of his task, his guide will be a most serviceable one for undergraduates or more advanced students wondering just where to enter to get their feet wet in the considerable waters of Trollope's work. After a brief biographical sketch, Pollard surveys Trollope's writings by grouping according to theme, length, and, in some cases, chronology: Irish novels and stories; social criticism novels; the Barchester chronicles; political novels; "other" longer novels, 1858-70; shorter novels, 1863-74; the "final phase"; and "miscellaneous"–the *Autobiography* plus short stories, travel-books, etc. Pollard begins each chapter with relevant background (e. g., an examination of the gentry) or an assessment of the novels' achievement, then examines each novel or work in some, though necessarily not exhaustive, detail. Plots are summarized, excerpts are quoted, and major characters analyzed to give a sense of the novel's content. His work is thus truly a guide, not only surveying Trollope's works but directing our eyes toward their charms, away from their longueurs.

Pollard's survey, then, is complete, informative, and for the most part balanced–though he is at times a bit crusty in his insistence on the "Victorianism" of Trollope. Most important, he achieves what he sets out to do: to provide a useful author-guide. I have two suggestions, though. Since the work is intended for novice Trollopians, a chronological list of Trollope's work appended to the text would clarify the order of publication that is sometimes obscured by Pollard's groupings. Secondly, because the reader must presently know in which novel a character appears to look him or her up, an index listing for characters' names would help the amateur to avoid getting lost in that Derby-Day multitude of Trollope's creations.

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Communities of Women: An Idea in Fiction by Nina Auerbach. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1978. Pp. 222. $11.50.

Madness and Sexual Politics in the Feminist Novel: Studies in Brontë, Woolf, Lessing and Atwood by Barbara Hill Rigney. Madison and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978. Pp. 148. $15.00.

On the cover of Nina Auerbach's fascinating book, three disembodied hands reach out to meet. Crimson shapes against an orange background, they look at first like shadow-animals cast by hands against a wall: lobster claws or wolves. This *trompe-l'oeil* graphic is an apt visual analog of Auerbach's unsettling critical imagination and the bold conclusions of her book. *Communities of Women* should become a special classic of feminist criticism, a book which testifies as strongly to the personal energies of its author as to the vitality of the sisterly intellectual communities, from *Feminist Studies* to the Radcliffe Institute, which nurtured its debates.

Auerbach takes as her subject the fictional treatment of the collective power of women grouped in the family, the school, the community and the state. She both incorporates and challenges the new feminist historiography about the special powers and moral strengths of what Carroll Smith-Rosenberg has called "the female world of love and ritual"; for in Auerbach's analysis the separate society inevitably evolves towards the values and tactics of the male power elite. Alternating between extended close analyses of several major novels, and stimulating references to a wide range of related literary and historical texts, Auerbach shows how the female community moves out of its passive and sanctified domestic enclosure into history, until Muriel Spark's "Brodie set" becomes a micro-Fascist brigade, and the militant women of international radical feminism (in Monique Wittig's *Les Guerillères* and Ti-Grace Atkinson's *Amazon Odyssey*) take on all the trappings of male power. In assuming public authority, in organizing and arming for its heroic quest, and in consciously mythologizing its own origins, this Amazonian collective finally "destroys the possibility of a female world as a sheltered shared enclave whose values are private and unique" (p. 190).

Auerbach calls her mixed "community of novels" an "appropriate oddity" (p. 30). In a chapter called "Waiting Together: Two Families," she boldly pairs the matriarchies of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Little Women*, a reading that convinces us of Alcott's seriousness and pathos without reducing Austen to domestic comedy. She bridges the worlds of *Cranford* and *Villette* by suggesting that Gaskell has as her model the extraordinary sisterhood of Haworth Parsonage, which she would later document in her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Again we are made to see the paradoxical power of the female community; *Villette* is a small state ruled by women whose administrative skills are professional rather than matriarchal, and Lucy Snowe is educated in "the art of ruling" as well as in her own emotions. When Auerbach turns to Gissing and James, and the male "vision of the female community as an equivocal source of power," the book loses some of its momentum; the "odd women" and the Bostonians lack the passionate coherence, and the unpredictability, of the communities imagined by women. But the concluding chapter is fresh, surprising, and courageous. By choosing to examine Muriel Spark's astringent modernist fables of the female will to power and to cite Simone de Beauvoir's "lugubrious analysis of the fantasy of a feminine 'counter-universe'" (p. 183), rather than to celebrate the new separatist sisterhoods of Marge Piercy, Mary Daly and Adrienne Rich, Auerbach makes an ideological, as well as a critical commitment.

It is in the area of ideology that this book will arouse controversy. Auerbach concludes with a nostalgia for the "individuality" of the little women, and "the humanly interdependent courtesy of Cranford," the substantiality of nineteenth-century realism and nineteenth-century heroines. Undoubtedly some will find the direction of her argument pessimistic, and will protest that a different selection of texts would reveal a more self-aware and hopeful feminist bonding, as in the novels of Gail Godwin, Lisa Alther, M. F. Beal, and Fay Weldon. From a historical perspective, the picture of a female community only recently invaded by violence, ambition, and ego seems inaccurate; the suffragists of 1910 perceived as vividly as Ti-Grace Atkinson that military discipline was the price to be paid for political power.

Yet we can go to other sources for history and ideology. Auerbach has a profoundly literary imagination; indeed, history as she uses it often seems to be a kind of serial novel with wonderful characters. What she gives us in this book is the vision of a female community as an organic entity, endowed with a consistency of purpose that is almost mythic. These matriarchal families, villages, schools, have an uncanny power to sustain themselves, to attract and annihilate male invaders, that seems to derive from their sublimation of sexual and economic appetite. Poor and hungry, they have channelled their immense consuming energies into strategies of survival. Auerbach's delight in paradox, her interest in startling textual juxtapositions, and the "elegant economy" (to borrow Cranford's highest praise) of her prose, constantly shakes ideas into new relations, and leads us to think about familiar texts in new ways. Not everyone will agree with her conclusions, but her book reminds us how stubbornly and rewardingly the feminist critic remains her own woman, whatever communities she joins.

The long title of Barbara Hill Rigney's short book sums up most of its contents, (except that the feminist novels are four in number: *Jane Eyre*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *The Four-Gated City*, and *Surfacing*; and the studies are Laingian). Rigney's thesis is that madness in the novel is "connected to the female social condition" (p. 7) and is an understandable response to the punishing *logos* of an insanely patriarchal society. Her model for this analysis throughout is R. D. Laing, whose views on oppression, and attacks on Freudian theory, traditional psychotherapy, the family, and the state, have some parallels to feminist ideology, but hardly constitute a feminist psychology. While Rigney acknowledges some of Laing's limitations, and especially his romanticization of insanity, she nonetheless makes unquestioning use of his terminology and his definitions. Laing's poetic notion of schizophrenia as the survival strategy of the "broken-hearted," the quest of a split personality for the wholeness which a deeply divided society tries to prevent, is metaphor rather than medicine. This is what Rigney means when she claims that "each novelist indicates that women in particular suffer from more or less obvious forms of schizophrenia, being constantly torn between male society's prescriptions for female behavior, their own tendencies toward the internalization of these roles, and a nostalgia for some lost, more authentic self" (p. 119). While this casual psychiatric labelling cannot harm fictional characters, such as Clarissa Dalloway, it is disturbing to think that real women struggling with such basic human dilemmas might be termed "schizophrenic." Rigney's refusal to question Laing's authority, to seek alternative perspectives, to ask why Doris Lessing, for example, turns to Laingian ideology after Marxism and before Sufism, deprives her book of a certain kind of psychological and cultural credibility. In her dependence on Laing, she still seems tied to a patriarchal tradition, albeit a counter-cultural one; the recent work of Jean Baker Miller and Nancy Chodorow, among other feminist psychologists, would be a useful corrective to Laing's excess.

Fortunately, her readings of these four novels take her beyond Laing to some exciting hypothesis about the female psyche. Although *Jane Eyre* is by now a standard text for feminist critics, and Bertha Mason has been frequently written about as a prototype for the "mad wife" in women's fiction, Rigney has some new things to say about the novel's equation of chastity and sanity, and about Jane's search for the mother-principle. Rigney argues that while none of the female characters in *Jane Eyre* is an adequate mother-figure for Jane, she achieves spiritual contact with a cosmic "moon-mother" who is associated with chastity but also with female consciousness. In identifying with this maternal spirit of self-respect, Jane unconsciously rejects "the role of motherhood for herself as being yet another threat to autonomy" (p. 36).

When Rigney examines the quest for the "metaphoric mother" (especially in her excellent chapter on Margaret Atwood) the Laingian apparatus fades into the background, and we see a uniquely-structured female literary psychology, with its own symbolism of nature, mirrors, and doubles. As she points out, the existing literature on the image of the *döppelganger* is inadequate for these works by women writers; her treatment of the double as "the recognition of the tragedy of one's own fragmentation" (p. 10) provides a helpful feminist re-interpretation. Occasionally Rigney misreads her texts; she thinks that St. John Rivers wants marriage to Jane to be sexless, and that Richard Dalloway "agrees" that Clarissa should sleep alone. But such lapses are minor; overall, Rigney's view of sexual withdrawal as an initial phase in a psychic process leading to re-integration, authenticity, and survival, is moving and persuasive. Like Auerbach's phenomenology of the female literary community, Rigney's analysis of the feminist psychic quest should generate lively and productive controversies.

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Emerson and the Orphic Poet in America by R. A. Yoder. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1978. Pp. xvi + 256. $13.50.

Emerson and Literary Change by David Porter. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1978. Pp. xiii + 248. $15.00.

"In spite of much literature on the subject," Stephen Whicher noted in 1957, "an adequate account of Emerson's theory and practice of poetry remains to be published." The concluding phrase undoubtedly exempts the pioneer studies of Carl Strauch, a lifework already well-known at the time. But Whicher states the case, as does Hyatt Waggoner's review of Emerson's achievement as a poet (*Emerson as Poet*, 1974), that makes the publication of these books by R. A. Yoder and David Porter so significant. Probably because even in a work as recent as Waggoner's Emerson's achievement as a poet is considered modest—consensus of a century of criticism, the poetry not to be compared with the high achievement of the prose—the poetry has not been engaged for what it so obviously is in view of Emerson's belief in the primacy of the Imagination: the focal, deepest ground of his life. Poetry always is for a poet, and Emerson, as he claimed, was a poet whose work *as a poet*, both Yoder and Porter demonstrate, is as central to American poetry as his work as a thinker (culture hero) has always been believed to be in respect to American thought. Yoder and Porter depicit different Emersons—at best, complementary Emersons—but they agree on his centrality as a poet and on the continuing centrality of just those issues (for a poetics inevitably expresses religious, philosophical, epistemological, and ethical concerns) that Emerson probed in his poetry. It would be enough to say in praise of Yoder and Porter that by revivifying Emerson's poetry in their readings of the drama of its deep allegories of Imagination they compel us to re-read it. (And on this reading I find in it more excellences than they allow.) But as an Emersonian and as one of the "anonymous scholars" Yoder mentions, I also wish to say that these books are noteworthy because they acknowledge their foundations in earlier work and renew in terms of perspectives scholarship and criticism have since brought forward the inquiries that in our time have established Emerson as a "central man." Not since Bishop's *Emerson on the Soul* have we had work of such importance.

What matters here is not an upward reassessment of the poetry but an appreciation of Emerson's profound commitment to poetry (Imagination) and its central place as the generative source of his work. Emerson himself spoke the critical consensus (and as Porter shows, the very thing that pressed him to liberate the Imagination in prose) when he said, "I am born a poet, of a low class without doubt yet a poet." He knew—and we know—that his "singing" was "'husky.'" Even so he insisted that it was his "nature & vocation" to be a poet, and in the high sense of "perceiver & dear lover of the harmonies that are in the soul & in matter, & specially of the correspondences between these & those." Here *perceiver* speaks for the Imagination, and *correspondences* for the metaphysical faith that early in Emerson's career assured him of "harmonies"—the spiritual vision, the transcendence represented by the binary structure and conversion plot of his poems, the vision soon enough challenged by his experience. Both Yoder and Porter begin here, with the recognition, as Yoder says, that the initial design of Emerson's poems is "founded in the order of correspondence" and that this design "implies the easy victory of imaginative insight over ordinary, mundane powers." And beginning here, both follow the development charted by Whicher–the descent from imaginative heights and assurance to the mid-world of scepticism and endless accommodation–to arrive, however, at different conclusions and different Emersonian traditions in poetry.

Yoder tells this story of transcendence and descendence in terms of the Orphic poet-figure so conspicuous in Emerson's work, and though the second part of his book is devoted to the poems he tells the story chiefly in terms of ideas, as an intellectual historian. He does not approach the poems as closely as Porter. Their literal activity does not concern him as much as the influences on them (for example, George Herbert on the early poems) and the legacy thy bequeathed to American poets. Telling the story twice, first in an account of the development of Emerson's Orphic mind, he recalls for us a great tradition and the more immediate context of European romanticism that nurtured Emerson's Orphic aspiration and subsequently sustained his Orphic compromise.

Emerson's Orphic career is the story of the Poet-hero (the American Scholar, as Porter shows, for the fable is everywhere in Emerson's work) who believes in the "conversation of the world." He believes, as Emerson says in "The American Scholar," that "as the world was plastic and fluid in the hands of God, so is it ever," and the poet, the godlike man, may give it "his signet and form." He is Orphic by virtue of being possessed by this "heroic passion," the passion to conform things to his thought, to invest "dust and stones with humanity, and [make] them words of Reason." And he is Orphic, too, by virtue of his belief in the sovereign power of the Imagination. In the conclusion to the paragraph in *Nature* (1836) from which the previous quotations are taken, Emerson says: "The Imagination may be defined to be the use which the Reason makes of the material world."

Now the Emerson who believed this is clearly a Promethean figure serving revolutionary ends. He is the exalted early Emerson who, under stress experience (a word underlined by the essay of that name), yielded revolution for revelation (song), external for internal apocalypse, spiritual summits for the mundane mid-world. The later Emerson, who accepts the "titmouse dimension," is the faithful sceptic who conforms to nature and seeks the answers to her riddles. He has yielded the vertical ascent, and his humbler task is to reconcile or balance the polarities of the horizontal, the actual prudential world. Orpheus-Prometheus, Osman, Saadi, the Plato of *Representative* Men, Merlin–the sequence of these figures in Emerson's work tells of the descent of Orpheus, of Emerson's defeat by nature.

This defeat, according to Yoder, is the Emersonian legacy, and in a compensatory way he sees it as a victory, hence as a *valuable* legacy. He explains:

> Because America has always had great expectations of a sublime and philosophical literature, its poets have accepted the tradition that Orpheus, the first poet, was the Whole or Universal Man, and they have tried to

> live up to Emerson's magnificent fable of the Orphic poet that promises freedom, revolution, and transcendence. But fable meets fact, and in the meeting progeny discover the severer limitations of their kind. The key to Emerson's prolific fatherhood is that, having made impossible demands on poets, he does not abandon them when they cannot do what he asks; his own example offers the ideal of a lesser Orpheus, who understands "the precise fact of our condition...."

And so Yoder gives us an Emersonian tradition of poetry of the dark, at the edge; a poetry of qualified idealism and limitation whose chief practitioners are Dickinson, Stephen Crane, Robinson, Frost, Stevens, and Ammons. He puts in eclipse the brighter Orphic Emersonian tradition of Whitman, Pound, Williams, Stevens (in others' reckoning), Hart Crane, and (I would add with qualifications in regard to idealism) Olson and Duncan.

And Porter? In giving us the fullest account we have had of Emerson's poetics and the struggle for "aesthetic liberation" it involved, he traverses a similar course from transcendence to descendence only to find in Emerson's *descendentalism* values wholly overlooked by Yoder. Where Yoder's work may be said to support the literary establishment, Porter's may be said to subvert it. And this is in keeping with his fresh view of Emerson as preeminently an *artist* concerned with formal matetrs. As artist, Emerson subverted the literary establishment of his time out of vital imaginative necessity. He had to shatter the formal constraints of his own poems—those coverting mechanisms, with their upward, transcending, abstracting plots—and discover for himself the imaginative possibilities of the spaciousness of prose.

No one has told so exactly the faults of Emerson's poetry and showed why we so much appreciate his prose, the *poetry* of the prose, to cite a chapter title in Waggoner's book, where Waggoner acknowledges that Emerson's prose is "more imaginative" than his verse. Yes, *more imaginative.* For even when the poems enact the correspondential vision and do the necessary Emersonian work of turning "adversity to advantage," they warp away from life, life leaks out. I borrow Porter's phrases and his measure of poetry—the very measure that finally moved Emerson to liberate his imagination (lower-case: no longer in the service of Reason), to turn it back/down from its translation of life into ideas, to life. (In this context, consider Williams' insistence on *descent* and *no ideas but in things*, and the Pound-Olson insistence on image over symbol.) Liberation is in this descent, and if descent is the defeat of one kind of aspiration it is also the victory of another. The extremity that proposed this redirection is evident in the polarity of ascent-descent and in the view that poetry is higher than prose, the one a vehicle of higher Truth, the other the vehicle of mundane truths. Emerson himself believed this "genteel" view—that poetry is limited to "poetic" subjects—and so in moving from it he rehearsed the continuing struggle between the genteel-spiritual and liberated-experiential traditions that for Porter represent the *discontinuity* of American poetry.

Experience is the crux. Nothing shows better Emerson's vocation as poet than his determination to liberate the Imagination in its behalf, to fasten it, as he said of words, to visible things, to give over the vertical (the correspondence of lower to higher) for the horizontal (the correspondence of language and thing, function and form), to forego remembering and mental deliverance for an active exploration of experience, to find imaginative means—among them, speech, the open form of the essay—equal to both the present activity of thought and the richness of the actual world. Where once Emerson dreamed the dream of consciousness that informs his early poetry—he would eat the apple of the world, swallow it—now he would marry it, possess its energy and life by coupling with it.

Porter speaks of this achievement as "a breakthrough into spaciousness" and so his alignment of Emerson and Charles Olson is not unexpected. Some may find it—and the reassessment of Emerson that makes it possible—shocking, but it is just: "Olson and Emerson a century apart called for a new reconcilation of the world and the language in which it is to be experienced." And with Olson as a touchstone, we know that Porter's version of the Emersonian legacy will diverge from Yoder's. It does, but with qualification. For open form, he believes, led to a disturbing "atomization":

> The great irony is that, in opening up poetic space, [Emerson] intended to demonstrate "the cheerful hint" in all things "of the immortality of our essence."... With the disappearance of that faith, what remained was an open form crowded with intractable experience, manifesting more clearly than ever the multitudiness of experience and the failure of the idealistic philosophy. The form was capable of a great gathering of life without any certain way to understand it.

The failure of the idealistic philosophy is indeed the issue. But Porter is himself not yet liberated from its assumptions. That he finds in the open form of Emerson's work "the first glimpses of the wasteland" and feels compelled to *understand* (to put experience in a certain framework, as in *Understanding Poetry*) indicates this. He is right to choose Olson as a gauge of the poetic enterprise, but he has yet to fully appreciate the open universe poets like Olson inhabit and the extent to which this has liberated the imagination and permitted what Williams called "unbound thinking." If Porter's interpretation is sound, and I think it is, then Emerson would have approved Hart Crane's concern with only the absolute nature of experience and preferred to *understanding* Williams' concern with *thinking with the poem* and in the writing living in the moment that he truly lives. Had Porter carried his study, as Kenneth Burke would say, to the end of the line, he would have had to consider texts like Whitehead's *Process and Reality* which underwrite postmodern open poetics and provide a post-wasteland generation of poets with another definition and assurance of *meaning*. Which is to say, as Hart Crane said, that we need not succumb to the "wasteland" nor give privileged statue to a poetry of despair, of the dark, of the edge.

It does not detract from the merit of these studies to note their incompleteness. How is it neither Yoder nor Porter treats Fenollosa, who brought so much of Emerson's poetics over into significant use in the modern era? Again, how is it Robert Duncan is omitted, this poet of liberated imagination whose Orphic determination is as conspicuous as Emerson's and whose work, founded on other assumptions, has not become that of a "lesser Orpheus"? And how is it a scholar so thorough as Yoder has not considered a book so much to his purpose and to the Orphic revitalization of language, Gerald Bruns' *Modern Poetry and the Idea of Language*?

But who isn't incomplete? It is only fair to add that these excellent studies may provoke the poets of the open tradition to recognize Emerson as the father of the "libertarian aesthetics," and every bit as important to them as Whitman. Perhaps the next edition of *The Poetics of the New American Poetry* will include Emerson.

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The Grim Phoenix: Reconstructing Thomas Pynchon by William M. Plater. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1978. Pp. xvii + 268. $12.50.

For the amateur reader, baffled or bemused by Thomas Pynchon's "multiplexity" (Plater's word), there is no aid or comfort in this new study, which compounds Pynchon's difficulties with several of its own. Such a reader would be well-advised to return to Tony Tanner's early essays in *City of Words*, or to Edward Mendelsohn's edition of essays in the *Twentieth-Century Views* series, or, *faute de mieux*, to Joseph Slade's guidebook to Pynchon's novels, published by the Warner Library. Professionals and diehard specialists, to say nothing of these interested in shifts of current critical winds, will however find much intelligent analysis here, though their interest may turn to exasperation before the last page is turned. Plater's book tends to reflect, not to reflect on, the various tics and preoccupations of its subject, and there is no small amount of subliminal special pleading. Moreover, since Pynchon's work presents a contemporary critical challenge of some magnitude, containing as it does at least one novel which most of its critics agree cannot be analyzed in any coherent way, Plater's choice of focus is a significant index to what happens in contemporary criticism of contemporary literature when text explication is renounced before it begins.

The method here is post-structuralist. As the subtitle suggests, however, the technique employed does not deconstruct or dismantle or engage in other forms of divestiture, but instead "reconstructs" the author's work. Why it should require reconstruction is a question Plater does not exactly answer, but the implication is that Pynchon's work lies in ruins. Judging from Plater's texture and tone, I take him to mean that he re-organizes the organizations and systems found in Pynchon so that they may be examined, if not ultimately analyzed (for reasons I shall get to shortly). The systems that are "reconstructed" are those familiar to all of Pynchon's readers: the Wittgensteinian "case"; systematic tourism, allied with metaphysical and actual colonialism; entropy and systems degeneration; paranoia and the uncertainty principle. Plater assumes a basic familiarity in his reader with each of these. What he does is to find the order *in* the order of the fiction, for "Pynchon makes his world comprehensible by showing how various things are related, how there are parallel existences, and, possibly, how there is reconciliation" (xiv). So there *is* an "order" in the fiction to reconstruct or reconstrue, critically. But perhaps not. "The only thing the reader can do with the facts of Pynchon's novels is to try to impose some order on all the clicks and whistles, all the noise" (14). If the order is imposed, then it must be the critic's, not the author's. Where *is* the order to be reconstructed, then, and whose is it, Plater's or Pynchon's? By contradicting himself, Plater recapitulates the typical Pynchon double-bind situation, Oedipa Maas's in particular. Elsewhere, he examines Pynchon's entropic processes, seeing him as a visionary pessimist, the latest in line of a series of dark Romantics obsessed with power and madness.

Combining notions concerning entropy and information theory, Plater reduces the characters in the fiction, and in some sense the reader of the fiction, to utter helplessness. "Regardless of where they are and what illusions of history the anarchists may harbor, they are all enclosed within the system of time that is smoothly, steadily winding down to an anarchy, the undifferentiated chaos of no time" (41). "Since criteria for finite measurement do not exist, uncertainty relations are all that can be known and they are expressions of the interdependence of continuities and discontinuities" (101). "As a force of equilibrium, love is another name for entropy and dying may thus be viewed as an act of self-love" (139). The helplessness apparent here is emphasized even more in the chapter on paranoia, where Pynchon's "ominous," "mysterious," and "hidden" elite is given the credit for laying waste to the earth. Statements of this sort have become standard in writings on Pynchon and to some degree in much current criticism; they are the critical equivalents to the loss of the self, the erasure of the subject, and the substitution of the system for the individual.

As far as Pynchon's tone is concerned, this kind of analysis is inaccurate. The reader senses the discrepancy each time Plater offers a quotation from the novels: though the literal meaning may be what he says it is, the tone—as is typical in Pynchon—is often manically jolly, wisecracking or comic. This *tone* is disregarded as if it were not significant information. Pynchon's use of entropy theory is examined but his jokes aren't, rooting Pynchon in Rilke and Nietzsche but not in Scott Fitzgerald or Captain Marvel or *Mothra*, the supposed basis of his next novel. The appalling humorlessness of this book makes Pynchon into a grim Puritan doomsdayer, damned by his Calvinism into a kind of mechanistic apocalypticism. But to analyze Pynchon's tone is to recognize that to some degree the humor produces a dissociated effect, as if the situations were not imaginary but fantastical, and the characters neither "real" nor believable.

Plater perceives this disjunction but does nothing with it. He admits that most of Pynchon's characters are unbelievable, citing the sailor Mehemet in *V.* as one of Pynchon's "few believable characters." Elsewhere he observes that in this fiction "people and places are incidental to systems and forces." If one cannot believe in the characters enmeshed in the systems, then what is being distorted in the systems themselves? Plater does not concern himself with the number of Pynchon's characters or their depthlessness. He tries to assert that there is a concern for caring among some of them, but as for love, it is another name for entropy, and in any case cannot take place between two- or one-dimensional characters. The difference between Pynchon's cartoon characters and his more embodied ones, such as the Poklers in *Gravity's Rainbow*, is, however, not fully explored.

Plater does not take on the question of whether these unbelievable characters inhabit some unrealistic variety of fiction, such as allegory or fable. He does, however, examine both uncertainty and paranoia at length. Paranoia, that disease of overinterpretation and mania, "may be the closest we can come to naming any theory that explains Pynchon's fictional world" (189). Paranoia assumes connectedness and bonding, of secret signs and hidden order and one's own victimization. Its result is the feeling of helplessness, and intelligence and abstraction are its helpmates and cohorts. It is odd, considering Plater's use of Freud in his discussion of the death-instinct, that Freud's more plausible theory of paranoia is never once mentioned. In Plater, paranoia is all of system and works from the top downward. No mention is made of the idea that paranoia is the result of blocked, converted, and projected Eros for one's own sex. In this discussion, it is always "out there," in some "grand design we cannot quite see" (190). That Plater never once inquires into the classical psychoanalytic basis of paranoia means that he has no way to connect paranoia with fantasy. The entire subject, since it is cut off from the body, becomes instantly mystified in "grand designs." To fill in the gaps would raise the presumably taboo subject of homosexual themes in Pynchon's work, which have become more obvious with each novel. Plater takes Pynchon too much at Pynchon's word, and accepts his explanations as proper and thus sees the military-corporate sources for feelings of persecution but not the sexual-erotic ones. It is thus no accident that Pynchon's characters are disembodied.

Similarly, the discussion of uncertainty in this book relies on Pynchon and Heisenberg and leaves the topic in an intellectual aether, where it generally stays in post-modernist criticism. Again, the result is a feeling of helplessness: "the more we zero in on dream and fantasy, the less we know about reality, or what passes for reality" (115). So there's no point in doing much of anything. But to what degree is the uncertainty principle dragged in by Pynchon and Plater to forestall commitments to action that one is too "cool" or frightened to take? Consequently, the Counterforce in *Gravity's Rainbow* is also a system and is "an inherent failure." But all this is based on Pynchon's universal metaphysic of control and power, where only absolutes have any lasting validity. The uncertainty principle may well be a theory employed to justify ironical stances toward others in caring and love, for fear of revealing the hidden self, or the vacant self. By positing uncertainty as a purely mentalistic function, unrelated to voyeurism, for example, Plater once again helps to dislocate the entire subject.

"...Pynchon has prevented definitive perceptions by forcing critics into uncertainty relations with his observable world and thus into distracting complexity" (132). "In a sense, *Gravity's Rainbow* has happened before in *V.* and *The Crying of Lot 49*, but Pynchon's latest novel is beyond comparison" (234).

There is a kind of authoritarianism here that places the problematic areas of Pynchon's fiction just beyond reach. It is not that *Gravity's Rainbow* is too long or complex to analyze, but that Pynchon has protected its true core by means of intellect and intellectual performance, much as Eliot did in *The Waste Land*. For Plater final authority is of course the author. Pynchon's cosmic mastermind has supposedly blocked criticism, but that process only occurs when the critic accepts the author's terms as the only genuine ones for discussion. Criticism cannot be said to be wholly responsible if it does not critique the author's concepts along with his characters and plots. By failing to analyze the local, as opposed to the metaphysical, origins of paranoia and uncertainty, by omitting any discussion of humor or Pynchon's remorseless sadism, Plater leaves Pynchon much as he was before the analysis began, with paranoia and systems floating high in the air, out of reach, like the rocket before its fall. This book is cult-criticism, and for all its care and intelligence, it bears the same relation to Pynchon's work as apologetics do to sacred texts.

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Escape from the Self by Karl Malkoff. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977. Pp. xvi + 181. $12.50.

Modern American Lyric: *Lowell, Berryman. Creeley, and Plath* by Arthur Oberg. New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1978. Pp. xiv + 182. $11.00.

John Berryman: *An Introduction to the Poetry* by Joel Conarroe. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977. Pp. xxiv + 215. $10.95.

The Poetry of John Berryman by Gary Q. Arpin. Port Washington, N. Y.: Kennikat Press, 1978. Pp. viii + 111. $8.95.

One of the features distinguishing "modernist" from "post-modernist" poetry is the attitude that their respective practitioners take toward "personality." As early as Aristotle, the tendency of minds to combine differently in terms of similarity, difference, cause and effect, and contiguity served as a basis for determining personality, and earlier, dialect, vocublary, idiom, and name offered other insights into character. The very difficulty in separating these elements led critics at the start of the twentieth century to equate personality and style so that one's style was one's personality. Yet, with the advent of Imagism and more clearly with T. S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), equations of personality and style began to change. For Eliot, great art was "not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality." and in this depersonalization, "art may be said to approach the condition of science." But, Eliot adds, "only those who have personality...know what it means to want to escape from [it]." The "progress of the artist" is, in such terms, an almost

Darwinian "continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality," For Ezra Pound, the process of extinction began "in a book called *Personae*" (1909), with his "casting off, as it were, complete masks of the self in each poem." It consisted, as William Carlos Williams was to say in an essay on Marianne Moore (1925), in "wiping soiled words or cutting them clean out, removing the aureoies that have been pasted about them or taking them bodily from greasy contexts."

By 1929, Eliot was recommending to younger poets the "transparency" of Dante's poetry to the "opacity" of Shakespeare's, adding that "the language of each great English poet is his own language; the language of Dante is the perfection of a common language." Yet three years later–perhaps influenced by Niels Bohr's complementaries theory–Eliot is willing to see in Shakespeare's writing the instrument of perception wed inevitably to perception and seemingly incompatible perceptions representative of aspects of truth without necessarily entering into direct conflict. Distinguishing Shakespeare's work from that of lesser writers, Eliot remarks that great poets generate a sense of "one significant, consistent, and developing personality." Certainly, it was the "opacity" of the writer that, by the end of the decade, the younger poets embraced. In "The Two Audens" (1939), Delmore Schwartz viewed the very poetic medium to which the young Eliot would sacrifice personality as an interplay of a writer's Freudian id and ego, and by the early fifties, Charles Olson portrayed it as physiological: "the head, by way of the ear, to the syllable/the heart, by way of the breath, to the line." Whatever the reasons of the "opacity," the choices of the "postmodernist" poets became less those momentary decisions that Søren Kierkegaard identified with art than the life choices he called ethical. As W. D. Snodgrass was to say in 1959, poets of his generation "who had gone so far in criticism and analysis so as not to be able to turn back and be innocent again" were left with the depths of their sincerity: their "only hope as artists" was to ask themselves continually, "Am I writing what I *really* think? . . .What I cannot help thinking?"

Karl Malkoff's *Escape from the Self* and Arthur Oberg's *Modern American Lyric* deal with the wide implications of these attitudes toward "transparency" in art as they come to illustrate a general "shared sense of man's capacity to experience himself and the world." At the same time, Joel Conarroe's *John Berryman: An Introduction to the Poetry* and Gary Q. Arpin's *The Poetry of John Berryman* focus on the implications of willed opacity as it affects the development of a single writer. For Malkoff, "escape from the self" begins with T. E. Hulme's recognition that "our principal concern. . .at the present moment should be the re-establishment of the temper or disposition of mind which can look at a *gap* or chasm without shuddering." Malkoff connects this recognition to Norman O. Brown's later assertion that "meaning is not in things but in between; in the iridescence, the interplay; in the interconnections; at the intersections, at the crossroads." By the devices of similarity, difference, cause and effect, and contiguity that Aristotle identified with personality, these "gaps" or "betweens" are consciously obscured into a "fixed point of view." Far from being "normal," this fixed point of view is "as much acquired as is the means of recognizing the letters of the alphabet, or of following chronological narrative." For Brown, Marshall McLuhan, and other contemporaries, including "modernist" poets, man's present task becomes that of ridding "connectives" and allowing things to mean freely by simple placement. Pound's *Cantos* offers "meaning" in a discontinuous flow of placements in the mind of a single individual. Williams' *Paterson* reinterprets this effort toward meaning as communal and centers it on place. Olson's *Maximus* sequence weds both techniques into a space/time continuum.

Malkoff's approach works well for Olson and writers of the Pound-Williams generation, but it begins to founder as it treats Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, and John Berryman. Here, Malkoff's making interchangeable "personality," "self," "ego," and "Freudian ego" crashes against their efforts to escape the tyranny of the Freudian ego for an interplay of id and ego that Freud himself identifies with "personality" and "self." Consequently, their efforts do not quite equate to the attempts of their predecessors to extinguish personality. Rather than a sequence exhibiting Freudian concepts and illustrative of Lowell's belief that, in the collapses of sectarian religion, "Freud seems the only religious teacher," *Life Studies* is seen simplistically as a long poem whose unmediated sections, changes of style, points of view, modes of expression, and contents signal its affinities to Pound's *Cantos*. Plath's "Daddy," "Lady Lazarus," and "Fever 103°" become communal reinterpretations of Lowell's individual testing of boundaries and, in its effort to be an interior version of Olson's space/time continuum, Berryman's *Dream Songs* offers "nothing less than a head-on assault on the notion of a single, consistent personality." Malkoff extends this interest in "transparency" to the writings of Allen Ginsberg, the Black Mountain poets, the New York poets, the Deep Imagists, the New Black poets, A. R. Ammons, and Mark Strand, where, again, cases for complementarities may be made. Malkoff also treats briefly the work of Theodore Roethke, Randall Jarrell, Delmore Schwartz, and Karl Shapiro as attempts to assert rather than escape self. Failing to perceive his own clear "fixed point of view," Malkoff completes his study with an attack on the egoism of certain critical schools and praise for the maverick "escapes" of Walter Ong, David Bleich, Walter Slatoff, and Stanley Fish.

In his study of the contemporary lyric, Oberg is less interested than Malkoff in presenting procrustean overviews. Oberg limits his discussions to the work of only four poets–Lowell, Berryman, Robert Creeley, and Plath–and concentrates on only "the short or compressed poem, the poem likely to express the thoughts and feelings of some 'I,' the song, the love poem." Even here, he seems less interested in the formal elements of lyrics than in their content. In the divorce of the lyric poem from music, he offers none of the standard structuring substitutes: he has recourse neither to the New Critics' belief that lyrics are improvisations on paradoxes or tensions nor to an extension of Arthur Schopenhauer's idea that music closely resembles the rhythm of thought so that, as modern lyrics adhere to the contours of thought, they indirectly approximate music, nor even to the more popular notions among contemporary writers that the formal elements of lyrics are physiological and somehow related to heartbeat or breath or para-linguistic and related to idiolect. Rather, what constitutes the distinguishing characteristic of lyrics for Oberg is their insistences "on addressing the intimate 'you' in us." In the case of Lowell, this effort is part of a "distinguishing between false styles and true styles, styles that conceal and styles that define." The result is not, as Malkoff suggests, "a poetry of cancellation or absence or silence," but "a poetry which must make and remake itself, again and over again, in order, like the perpetual lover, to get the world right." In a syllogism whose undistributed middle is guaranteed to horrify any logician, Oberg proposes for Lowell that "to live is to change; to live is to love; therefore, to love is to change."

The strength of Oberg's book rests not in its definitions or logic so much as in its descriptive responses to nuance, particularly in the crucial Freudian matters of "love" and "death." Oberg perceives, for example, that Berryman's *Dream Songs* "keep[s] refusing to yield what it is about." The volume leaves an impression that "Berryman is writing a love poem which the piling negatives and hypothetical 'if's' never succeed in overwhelming completely" and where a "counterwill" insists on "an acknowledgment of human need for love: warmth, rest, sustenance, music ('notes'), and light ('sun')." "In his need to love and be loved," Oberg discovers, "Berryman's Henry must confront the limitations of himself as a desiring man," so much so that Berryman "significantly" surrounds love "as a word and as a concept, with quotation marks." In contrast, Creeley's "thinking in words is...radically dramatic and emotive" and "can assume the proportions of a godlike remaking of a world....In ways that refuse to distinguish between literature and jotting, poetry and prose, lyric and pornography," his "intentional strategies" are "to write on behalf of or for love, to make language come true, and to align language with matters of love and self." For Plath, there is a comparable "wish and need to clear a space for love" at the same time her work inclines "to see love as unreal" and fear an inability "to give and receive." Distortions and displacements of love eventually occur, and Oberg interprets the final poems not as "the mystically calm, orderly poems which some critics have seen them to be. Instead, they are the terrible, terrifying creations of a woman who, near the end of a life, still could not do without love, even if she never learned what to do with it."

The combined arguments of Conarroe and Arpin accept an "opacity" for "post-modernism" similar to that of Oberg's study, suggesting in the process the eventual model of most books dealing with John Berryman's work. Differing only in what constitutes Berryman's "supreme" achievement, Conarroe and Arpin view his career as a preface to a major poem. In the case of Conarroe, this poem is *The Dream Songs*; in the case of Arpin, *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet*. Berryman then "declines" slightly into *Love & Fame*, *Delusions, Etc.*, and the posthumously edited *Henry's Fate*. Both critics presume that autobiographical poetry should be "ethical" and, although they duly report Berryman's quarrel with Eliot about "consistent personality" and Berryman's insistence in the "Scholia" to *Love & Fame* that "each of the four movements criticizes backward the preceding, until Part 4 wipes out altogether all earlier presentations," both seem not to understand the aesthetic implications of this "choosing for the moment." Berryman is fighting to preserve the "art sense" of the lyric in the face not only of popular fashion but also of a tradition of ethical lyricism that begins prior to Boethius and extends through Nietzsche into James

Joyce. Berryman may fail in these final books to make his "momentary choices" as attractive as the "momentary choices" that occur in the traditionally "false" narrative worlds of *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet* and *The Dream Songs*, but more attention might have been given his effort. In allowing *Berryman's Sonnets* to be printed, he had indicated that his concern was "whether wickedness/was soluble in art," and certainly Auden's recent successes in this area had indicated that a poet might transcend the ethical demands of post-modernism. Jarrell's review of *The Shield of Achilles* describes a high order of religion and meta-morality resulting from a "Conscious and Moral Auden. . .quite consciously and immorally" letting an "Unconscious Auden" have its play.

Conarroe admits "outright that most of [Berryman's] work of the 1940s (and late 1930s) appeals to [him] primarily because of its relationship to the later books." He finds the work in *Five Young American Poets* (1940) and *Poems* (1942) "utterly unexceptional" and inhibited. In *The Dispossessed* (1948), he singles out only "Canto Amor" and "Nervous Songs" as "major achievements." He finds the lover of *Berryman's Sonnets* "still held in check," although threatening already to burst forth into the "exuberant persona" that will make *The Dream Songs* a masterpiece of "private sorrows." *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet* continues to keep this exuberance in check by allowing the work's energy and passion to emerge in the persona of Bradstreet, and in the book's longest and best chapter, he presents his argument for the achievements of *The Dream Songs*. For Conarroe, "the songs represent, as much as anything else, attempts [by Berryman] to get his dreams, memories, and fears out in the open as a means of coming to grips with them, of escaping their tyranny." Conarroe finds the various poems "for the most part" neither "placed in the order in which they were composed nor. . .organized around any clearly delimited period of time." Nonetheless, unlike Pound's *Cantos* or Williams' *Paterson*, which "could have been continued indefinitely," Conarroe detects a "unity" in that "it is not possible to imagine a reopening of *The Dream Songs* after number 385, so absolute is the sense of closure." He argues, in addition, that the "archaic and Latinate constructions. . crumpled syntax, odd diction, idiomatic conversation, and conscious violation of grammatical rules" that comprise Henry's voice are finally "far better suited to the expression of [Berryman's] fears and struggles than. . .the more impersonal, less consistent mode" that dominates the final volumes.

Arpin is less concerned with the expression of Berryman's individual fears and struggles than with the allusive nature of the writing, arguing that "Berryman was an enormously well-read man," who used the knowledge he gained from reading "both to create a world and to give the effect of a man ransacking our culture in an attempt to find a way of living in that world." He warns those who might put much weight on the autobiographical element in Berryman's work that Berryman's "reading was frequently as important as his experience." In contrast to Conarroe, Arpin sees Berryman's contribution to *Five Young American Poets* as containing "some very fine work." Arpin tends to value more highly, too, the poems of *The Dispossessed*. Arpin is best, however, in his tracing of literary echoes and antecedents in *Berryman's Sonnets*, *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet*, and *The Dream Songs*. Here echoes of Tristan Corbière, Sir Philip Sidney, Sigmund Freud, Dante, W. B. Yeats, Anne Bradstreet, Stephen Crane, and others illuminate the "tradition" of poetry which at its worst justifies Jarrell's early complaint that "doing things in a style all its own sometimes seems the primary object of the poem." Arpin prefers *Mistress Bradstreet* to *The Dream Songs* because it is "more coherent" and "more successful," adding that the latter sections of *The Dream Songs* fail to redeem "trival experiences" and the "unity" of the whole does not prevent "many individual parts...being juggled around without seriously affecting the structure." The late poems Arpin sees attempting "to do with language more than the language will successfully allow." The failures are not of character or individual talent so much as of desperate experimentation—an exhaustion of individual, purposive linguistic possibility.

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MARIA RUEGG*

The End(s) of French Style: Structuralism and Post-Structuralism in the American Context

1. The Question of French Styles

Americans have never had a reputation for being particularly "stylish." It perhaps because of our Puritan heritage, or the rigors of frontier life, or simply the fact that we inherit an Anglo-Saxon tradition marked by pragmatism; in any case, we have a tendency to be wary of styles. And the creations of French fashion represent, for us, the epitome of style: frivolous, outrageously expensive, utterly impractical, and, more often than not, indecent. The fabrications of Parisian designers are, in the eyes of many, the very symbols of the decadence and the bankruptcy of European civilization.

Unlike the comfortable, solidly constructed, durable tweeds that characterize British style, French fashions are made neither to fit nor to last. Hardly intended for everyday wear, the "Paris original" is ingeniously contrived and intricately, if somewhat flimsily, fabricated with rare, costly, delicate materials. It is designed neither to flatter nor to warm the body, and whatever its practical or aesthetic value, it is inevitably discarded at the end of a season.

When structuralism was introduced in this country, in the late 60's and early 70's, it was viewed by many as the product of a European intellectual fashion industry, centered—appropriately—in Paris. And like the products of Parisian dress design, structuralism seemed to epitomize the dangerously seductive qualities of style; as intellectual fashions go, it was flashy, different, ingenious and slightly exotic. But, again like most French styles, it was impractical, inaccessible, not terribly well constructed, and it had a tendency to ignore, if not to distort, the body to which it applied—the body, in this case, of the Western intellectual tradition.

It is impossible to avoid styles altogether, of course (although academia, like other institutions designed to preserve our civilization—the Army, the Church, the Law—is traditionally more resistant than most to changes in style). And it is, in fact, not fair to imply that all

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Americans lack (French) style; indeed, if anyone today keeps the Parisian fashion houses in business, it is no doubt the small, but influential group of buyers from our exclusive Eastern stores. And from the upper floor salons of Bloomingdales, Saks and Bergdorff's to the main floor ready-to-wear racks of Macy's, it is only a matter of time. Despite our wariness of style in general—and of French styles in particular—the clothes we end up wearing are usually second- or third-hand versions of the very styles we had refused to buy in the original. By a process of assimilation, which generally passes unnoticed, the radically new and shocking creations of foreign design are translated and domesticated, until in the end, fully appropriated, they become indigenous products. But by that time, it goes without saying that the "Paris original" has lost its originality, and on Fifth Ave., let alone in Paris, it has long since been out of style.

The dissemination of structuralism in this country is, in many ways, a case study of such a process of assimilation: greeted initially with intense hostility, structuralism survived and was eventually to enjoy a tremendous success. But by the time it became palatable to the majority of American academics, which was not until the mid 1970's, it had long since disappeared from the French intellectual scene; even those who introduced it—the avant garde of those elite universities located on the "Eastern axis" which stretches from Ithaca to Baltimore, via New Haven—had, for a number of years, been treating structuralism with a certain degree of contempt. And as structuralism gradually gained wider and wider acceptance, what is called "post-structuralism" began to emerge as the dominant trend in avant-garde criticism.

"Post-structuralism" presented itself as a radically new style—and especially as a style that was radically different from "structuralism." Most closely associated with the name of Derrida (although the term often refers, paradoxically, to a number of critics whose texts have suffered the knife of Derridean deconstruction: Lacan, in particular, and also Foucault), post-structuralism seemed designed in almost deliberate opposition to its predecessor: instead of "structures," one spoke of "deconstruction"; instead of articulating binary oppositions, one spoke of their "differANCE"; instead of "parole," one spoke (sic) of "écriture"; instead of a "science of man," touched with nostalgia for the passing of humanism, one spoke with joy of the "end of man"; and instead of a "science of literature," one spoke of the "death of philosophy"—and in particular, of the failure of literary criticism.

Understandably, in such a context, structuralism—like existentialism and phenomenology before it—began to appear as a pillar of the very tradition it was once thought to threaten (and this was symbolically confirmed, for many, when Lévi-Strauss was made a member of the Académie Française) while post-structuralism, naturally, took its place as the French menace to Western civilization.

It remains to be seen whether post-structuralism is a style that can be translated and adapted to suit local tastes, and whether it is one that will eventually be assimilated, like structuralism, into the mainstream of American critical culture. The divisions it has already created among American critics are, in many ways, more profound than those created by structuralism.[1] And that is primarily because the interests at stake seem so much higher: it is no longer simply a question of trying to make a "science" out of literary criticism; it is a question of denying the validity of literary criticism itself, and even more basically, of rejecting the entire Western tradition. How, then, can a style that destroys the possibility of criticism be assimilated by the very institution of criticism it would destroy?

To many of his supporters as well as his attackers, Derrida is the last French designer; and deconstruction, the style to end all styles. Derrida himself has contributed, in no small measure, to this apocalyptic vision of his work: one has only to look at *Glas*—Derrida's death dance for Western philosophy (and, needless to say, literary criticism)—to see how closely "deconstruction" is linked to the "end of philosophy" (and the theme is by no means confined to *Glas*). Yet it is precisely there, in the mire of *Glas*—in the midst of death, impotence, castration, murder, crucifixion, prostitution—that Geoffrey Hartman, for one, finds the comforting assurance that deconstruction, far from threatening the Western tradition, actually reaffirms it; and it is there that he finds evidence for his deliberately provocative assertion that Derrida is in fact a "conservative thinker."[2]

It is perhaps not by chance that those who tend to feel the least threatened by Derridean deconstruction are often those who work particularly closely with Romantic theory: Hartman, Paul de Man,

[1] The debate between Wayne Booth, M. H. Abrams (both anti-structuralist) and J. Hillis Miller (pro) that took place at the 1976 MLA convention gives a good indication of these divisions. See "The Limits of Pluralism," *Critical Inquiry*, 3 (1977), 407-47.

[2] Geoffrey Hartman, "Monsieur Texte: On Jacques Derrida, His *Glas*," *Georgia Review*, 29 (1975), 759-97.

Jean-Luc Nancy, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Eugenio Donato. For those familiar with the concerns of the Romantics are more aware than most that the "crisis of representation" associated with post-structuralist criticism is by no means "new." De Man has found its traces in the texts of Rousseau, Donato in the texts of Flaubert, Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe in those of the Jena Romantics.[3] Indeed, for Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe, the similarity between the categories of deconstructive criticism and those of the early Romantics is so striking that they have spoken of modern criticism as a "compulsive repetition" of Romanticism.[4]

But if, as I shall try to argue, the strategy of deconstruction can indeed, in a sense, justifiably be called "conservative," it is not simply because its "roots" can be traced to the Romantics: it is because, despite the radical potential of its logic, it rests on a number of very traditional assumptions about the function of literature, about the function of criticism, and about the ways in which the two are related—assumptions that are called into question, as I shall try to show, by the very logic they are called on to support.

In order to make such an argument, however, it is first necessary to have some idea of the context—or at least, a certain part of the context—from which the "crisis of representation," in its modern form, has emerged. It is necessary to look briefly at certain aspects of the "structuralist phenomenon," and in particular, at the history of its dissemination here, in this country. For not only do post-structuralists share many of structuralism's assumptions, interests, and values; they share many of the assumptions, interests and values of American literary criticism—which is after all the only reason why either structuralism or post-structuralism could have ever come "into style" in this country. To speak, in Miller's terms, of "canny" as *opposed* to "uncanny" critics (that is, of a post-structuralism that would be radically distinct from both structuralism and American literary criticism)[5] is to ignore the infinite and indeterminable variety of ways in which the two intersect, overlap and combine; and above all, it is to blind oneself to what is in many ways the very traditional nature of both.

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[3] See Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Blindness," *Blindness and Insight* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), Ch. VII; Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *L'absolu littéraire* (Paris: Seuil, 1978); Donato's forthcoming book on Flaubert.

[4] Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, p. 28.

[5] J. Hillis Miller, "Stevens' Rock and Criticism as Cure," *Georgia Review*, 30 (1976), 330-48.

2. *The Dissemination of Structuralism*

By 1965, structuralism was all the rage in Paris, and Americans with close ties to the French intellectual scene began to take note.[6] Two events marked the introduction of structuralism to the American literary public, both in 1966: the first was the symposium held at Johns Hopkins entitled, "The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man" which boasted the participation of leading French intellectuals associated in one way or another with structuralism (including Barthes, Goldmann, Lacan, Hyppolite, Ruwet, Todorov, and Derrida, who was at that time relatively unknown); the second was the publication of a special issue devoted to structuralism in *Yale French Studies*, which included translations of Lévi-Strauss and Lacan, as well as explanatory essays by several American critics.

The impact of both events was extremely limited, however: *Yale French Studies* has a very narrow audience, and the proceedings of the Hopkins symposium were not even published until 1970. Until then—and, in the same year, the *YFS* volume appeared in Anchor paperback[7]—few American academics, apart from the Eastern-axis "avant-garde" had ever heard of the "structuralist phenomenon."[8]

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[6] In 1965, *L'Arc* devoted a major issue to Lévi-Strauss (No. 26). The major works of Lévi-Strauss were, by that time, well known: *Les Structures elémentaires de la parenté* had been published in 1949 (Presses Universitaires de France), *L'Anthropologie structurale* in 1958 (Plon), *Tristes Tropiques* in 1955 (Plon), *La Pensée sauvage* in 1962 (Plon). Barthes' *Sur Racine* came out in 1963 (Seuil), *Essaies Critiques* in 1964 (Seuil); the writings of the Russian formalists were translated and published by Seuil in 1965 (*Théorie de la littérature*), and in the same year Althusser's influential *Pour Marx* (Maspero) appeared.

[7] *Structuralism*, ed. Jacques Ehrmann (New York: Doubleday, 1970). *The Languages of Criticism and the Science of Man*, eds. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970).

[8] A number of Lévi-Strauss' texts had been translated—*Structural Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1963); *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); *Elementary Structures of Kinship* (New York: Beacon Press, 1969); *The Raw and the Cooked* (New York: Harper, 1969)—but they were virtually unknown except to anthropologists (who were, on the whole, quite hostile). Anthony Wilden's annotated translation of Lacan's "Discours de Rome" was published in 1968 as *The Language of the Self* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968), but remained in limbo for several years, and few had heard of Barthes' *Writing Degree Zero/Elements of Semiology* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967) until they were republished by Beacon in 1970.

And what they began to hear in the course of the following years (particularly when the paperback edition of the Hopkins book came out in 1972, under the new title, *The Structuralist Controversy*) they did not like. The negative reaction was in a sense predictable. By tradition, Anglo-American criticism is resolutely pragmatic. If a theory of art, culture, history, or metaphysics is to be of any value, it must " translate " well into practical terms: it must offer models that can be applied by the critic to the various texts he confronts in the day to day business of criticism. In order to do so, a theory must first of all be clear; and secondly, it must work: it must have a logical order that can be demonstrably related to some observable order in the text, and it must be sufficiently complex to be able to account for more than the most obvious generalities.

Structuralism was quickly indicted on both counts. A confused, garbled style made it incomprehensible to the uninitiated: it was cluttered with jargon, its syntax was unnecessarily tortured, its tone disagreeably smug and arrogant, and its rhetoric at once pretentiously radical and blatantly elitist. The message that did manage to get through was so abstract and general that it could be of little or no practical use—a judgment only too painfully confirmed by the rare examples of early structuralist " practical criticism." The best known essay in this genre was Lévi-Strauss' and Jakobson's much anthologized structural analysis of Baudelaire's " Les Chats ": a piece that made the most plodding New Critic seem divinely inspired.[9]

Moreover, in the context of an academic system which prides itself on " professionalism "—a virtue closely associated with the strict separation of disciplines—structuralism could hardly seem anything but " unprofessional." A dilettantish mish-mash of philosophy, anthropology, linguistics, psychoanalysis and poetics, it nonetheless laid claim to the status of a " science "; and yet, militantly anti-realist, it rejected the authority of empirical evidence and with it the necessary condition of any science: the possibility of its own " falsifiability."[10]

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[9] Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roman Jakobson, " 'Les Chats' de Charles Baudelaire," *L'Homme*, 2 (1962); the translation appeared in *Structuralism: A Reader*, ed. Michael Lane (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970).

[10] The Anglo-Saxon empiricist is the stock villain of structuralist discourse. The " scientificity " of structuralism can neither be confirmed nor denied on the basis of any observation of " real facts," since it is based on the " discovery " of the unconscious structures (linguistic, psychoanalytical) that allegedly *determine* those facts. On the question of structuralism as a " science," see Lévi-

Behind all this lay the general suspicion that even if one were to invest the time and energy necessary to acquire an adequate familiarity with "structuralism"—and, to many, the cost was prohibitive—one would discover, only too painfully, that the price of high fashion is enormously over-inflated. And for two paradoxically opposed reasons: first, that behind all the elaborate linguistic embroidery lurked nothing but the most well-known, common truths; and secondly, that there was something "dangerous" in these texts that threatened the very foundation of the Western intellectual tradition—that structuralish, like the poisoned shirt Deianira offered Hercules, was designed to destroy our body of knowledge (and to make it writhe in agony in the process).

Part of the confusion was due to the fact that "structuralism" referred, in this country, not only to those who called themselves, at one time or another, "structuralist" (Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, Genette, Todorov), but also to those who explicitly disavowed the label (Foucault), to those who gave it only passing reference (Lacan, Althusser) and to those who openly attacked it (Derrida). In other words, it referred to what would later be recognized and identified—après coup—as "post-structuralism."

The confusion was by no means unjustified. For in American eyes, and quite rightly, there were two themes, in particular, that characterized structuralism—and that justified grouping together Lévi-Strauss, Foucault, Lacan, Barthes, Althusser and Derrida under the catch-all heading "structuralist." One was their common insistence on the absolute priority of language, and the other was their concerted attack on the "humanist" concept of "man" (man as the freely creating master of his own discourse: a concept, it might be noted, taken not from the Renaissance, but from the nineteenth century).

The two were strictly correlated, and their relationship was always expressed in terms of mutual dependence; as Foucault put it, for example, in a particularly eloquent phrase, "man is in the process of perishing as the being of language continues to shine ever brighter on the horizon."[11] And necessarily so: for if language is viewed, in

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Strauss, "Linguistics and Anthropology," in *Structural Anthropology* and the introduction to *The Savage Mind*; Roland Barthes, "Science Versus Literature," *Structuralism: A Reader*; Julia Kristeva, "La Sémiotique, science critique et/ou critique de la science," *Sémiotiké* (Paris: Seuil, 1969); Jacques Lacan, "La Science et la vérité," *Ecrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966).

[11] Michel Foucault, *Les Mots et les choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), p. 397. Trans. *The Order of Things* (New York: Random House, 1970).

structuralist terms, as a system of abstract, functional relationships that is " always already " there, prior to and independent of man's advent on the " scene "; and if, further, language is taken as the ultimate " ground " of both thought and reality—as that which constitutes the condition of their possibility and as that which determines their articulation—then " man," as the self-constituting " cogito " of the Cartesian tradition, is clearly a myth. And he is a " myth " because the essential properties that have always defined him as " human "—his reason, his imagination, his emotions, his will, his actions—do *not* in fact " belong " to him, but come to him already structured, already determined by language. To the extent, then, that " being " is recognized as the privilege of language, man loses his identity, he " perishes ": as the sun, " shining ever brighter," effaces—in the revealing—the illusory glory of the earth.

For the structuralists, language was not the instrument of man, man was the instrument of language; man did not speak language, he was spoken by language. No longer the self-conscious, autonomous center of a humanist universe, " man " was merely an " ex-centric " function in a system of relationships over which he had no control. And whether the news was announced with Rousseauistic nostalgia, with Freudian submission, with Nietzschean gusto, or in the guise of Marxist truth—the message was unavoidably the same, in text after text: the star of language was rising, and the " end of man " was at hand.[12]

The ascendancy of language and the immanent " disappearance " of man had profound implications, among other things, for literary criticism. To begin with, if " man " was a myth, then the source of a literary work could hardly be its " author." And if thought and reality were themselves structured by language, then the language of the text could hardly be said to " represent " or " reflect " any idea or any object. The text had no " origin " and no " end " outside of language, and its " meaning " could be located neither in the " consciousness " of the writer, nor in the " Weltanschauung " of his socio-historic milieu, nor in the educated insights of some "ideal reader," nor even in the words themselves—since words, like thoughts, could only take on meaning in terms of the structure, the system of relationships, that determined their articulation. And since that structure was always, by definition, "absent" (as the hidden principle that organized the text), so too was the "meaning" ever absent; and the only way it could be located was by reading the "gaps" in the text's "signifying chains."

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[12] See, in particular, the final chapter of *Les mots et les choses*, "Les Sciences humaines," pp. 355-98; Jacques Derrida, "Les Fins de l'homme," *Marges* (Paris: Minuit, 1972); Louis Althusser, in *Pour Marx*, speaks of a "history without a subject," and Lacan, throughout the *Ecrits*, argues against the "integrated self" of ego psychology.

None of this sat particularly well with the average American critic in the early 1970's. Despite the patient efforts of avant-garde critics (like Geoffrey Hartman, who, as early as 1966, attempted to situate structuralism in the more familiar, and less threatening context of Anglo-American myth criticism[13]—the majority of academics remained either hostile or suspicious. Most "serious scholars" dismissed the phenomenon as a passing French fancy and, adopting the strategy of the ostrich, tried simply to ignore it, taking solace in the certitude that what is "in style" this season will be "passé" come the next.

Others, taking the matter more seriously, vehemently protested against what they saw as the subjection of the American intellectual public to the whimsical, imperialistic dictates of Parisian high fashion designers. And operating on the theory that if the public refuses to buy, importers will be dissuaded from investing in the product, they tried to convince the avant-garde that structuralism was an unprofitable investment: it was simply too ill-suited to the tastes, traditions and needs of Anglo-American criticism.

The embargo was, of course, a failure; in the course of the next few years—from about 1972-1975—structuralism, like the midi, was assimilated into the mainstream of American critical culture. Translated, anthologized, summarized, explained, modified and adapted to suit the Anglo-American market, structuralism became a respectable addition to our critical wardrobe. Works such as Jameson's highly readable account of structuralism in The *Prison House of Language* (1972), Boon's *From Symbolism to Structuralism* (1972-3), Scholes' *Structuralism* (1974), and above all—for traditional literary critics (particularly those nurtured on New Criticism)—Culler's *Structuralist Poetics* (1975), all helped to bridge the gap between French and American critical styles, and to calm the fears of those determined to defend the Anglo-American tradition.

In the process of assimilation, structuralism gradually came to appear, not as a radically threatening revolutionary theory, but as a kind of formalism, not unlike Chomskian linguistics, and in many respects, not even unlike New Criticism. The intimidating rhetoric was discounted as typical Latin exaggeration; the jargon soon became familiar; and the anti-metaphysical view of language, as an autonomous system of relationships, was after all, not so different from either logical positivism or the language games of Wittgenstein.[14]

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[13] Geoffrey Hartman, "Structuralism: The Anglo-American Adventure," in Ehrmann.

3. *The Interests of a Symbolic System*

If structuralism was so rapidly assimilated after an initial reaction that was not only sceptical but often violently hostile, it was not merely due to the conscientious promotion efforts of devoted translators and commentators, and, although there is much to justify the charge of elitism, neither was it the fruit of some dark plot hatched in ivy-covered towers, designed to assure Eastern hegemony of the American critical scene. (By that time, of course—the early 70's—the avant-garde had already abandoned structuralism, a shift that was reflected as early as 1971, in the preface to *The Structuralist Controversy*.)[15] Nor, was it, finally as purists have charged, the result of a process of " recuperation " in which the " true," the " original " structuralism would have been emptied of its " revolutionary content " and " vulgarized " in order to make it marketable to a philistine American hoi polloi.

It has to do, much rather, with the recognition that Anglo-American criticism has certain interests in common with structuralism. And nowhere have those interests been more accurately expressed than in the opening pages of Geoffrey Hartman's masterful analysis of Derrida's *Glas*:[16]

> The seeming impotence of traditional humanistic philosophies, together with the obvious success science has had in turning its provisional mastery of the world into a real imposition, may have

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[14] Kristeva's works are particularly marked by the influence of logical positivism. See, for example, " Pour une sémiologie des paragrammes," " Poésie et négativité " and " L'engendrement de la formule," *Sémiotiké*.

[15] " Today we may question the very existence of structuralism as a meaningful concept. . ." ; " Although the intellectual inheritance was clear, with its preoccupation with articulated sign-systems and the repudiation of the hermeneutic enterprises of the last century, evidence was already available in the Johns Hopkins symposium of the ensuing moment of theoretical deconstruction." *The Structuralist Controversy*, ed. Macksey and Donato (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), p. ix.

[16] Hartman, " Monsieur Text," 760.

encouraged this turn to a symbolic system, which, though open to abuse and technological alienation, is so bold, ongoing and polyglot, and so inherent if not coherent in a biological sense, that it has a better chance of resisting the exploitative or marketing closures of science, or of ideologies that claim to be scientific. For what goes under the name, for instance, of a science of language is more like a methodical miscellany, a pleasingly ordered chaos like most literature, including Jacques Derrida's *Glas*.

"Symbolic" is, of course, a key term in the structuralist discourse, and most particularly in Lacanian psychoanalysis.[17] And while it may seem overly ingenuous to enlist Derrida's support in a "symbolic" cause which he, alone among major contemporary French critics has openly criticized,[18] Hartman's use of the term is sufficiently vague to include not only Derrida, but also—and quite rightly, in spite of the revolutionary Copernican claims made for the "symbolic" by structuralists—a very long, ancient and powerful symbolic tradition.

But in the more specific sense in which structuralists have typically employed the term, a "symbolic system" is a system of language. The primary function of language is, for the structuralist, neither "real" (to refer to material things) nor "imaginary" (to refer to ideas, or conscious thoughts), but rather "symbolic": "symbolic" in the sense that language, because it is the privileged and absolutely prior means of exchange for man, serves to organize, according to the laws of its structure, all systems of human relationships (social or physical). (And it is literally a means of exchange "for man": woman, for both Lévi-Strauss and Lacan, is an object of exchange, and hence like words, or like letters—"la lettre volée," for example—she is part of that language which speaks/is spoken by man. Derrida, in an article on Nietzsche, which addresses itself to the "question of woman," does little to change this structure of symbolic priorities, which is why Hartman is quite right to include him here with the structuralists; Derrida's attack against "the symbolic" consists merely in rendering it "undecidable" . . . and woman, instead of a "lettre," becomes "écriture.")[19]

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[17] "The Symbolic" for Lacan is the realm of "la vérité freudienne." It concerns the structure of that unconscious mechanism which, to the humanist's despair, entirely controls man's conscious behavior and reveals his essence as a being that "lacks" whatever is the object of his illusory desire. The symbol of that absence is the Phallus, object of desire par excellence, since it is that which, if it existed, would eliminate the anxiety of castration; but its essence is precisely its lack, since it is the Phallus that Mother Never Had. ("The imaginary," in contrast, is, in Lacan's schema, the realm of perpetually displaced desire, the illusory realm of the Cartesian cognito, filled with the false hopes and cherished illusions of classical humanism: desire for a centered self, master of the world and in control of his own language; desire for recognition from the father, desire to replace the father.)

[18] See, in particular, "Le Facteur de la vérité," *Poétique*, No. 21 (1975) and the end of "Positions," *Diacritics*, 3, No. 1 (1973), 42-44.

The interests of this "turn to a symbolic system" (which, taken together, constitute the interest of structuralism and post-structuralism for American literary criticism) are several; but the one to which Hartman points here— the interest of protecting the autonomy of language, of "literature," and of culture in general from the encroachments of "the real"—is perhaps the most fundamental. What is so attractive about a "symbolic system" is its potential *power* in fighting the *real* encroachments of science and of politics: in Hartman's words, the fact that it offers a "better" chance of resisting the exploitative or marketing closures of science, or of ideologies that claim to be scientific" (and the latter, in American ideology, generally refers to Marxism).

There is a radical distinction, then, between the "inhuman" world of "the real"—realm of concrete, material things and of empirical facts—and the properly "human," that is to say *linguistic*, world of man, viewed as the speaking/spoken subject of discourse. If the symbolic systems of structuralism and post-structuralism can, despite their militantly "anti-humanist" stance, take the place of traditional humanistic philosophies, it is because they both, in the end, share the same interest: that of protecting *man* against the predatory, exploitative *in*humanity of those disciplines that would either ignore him altogether (the "hard" sciences), or worse, that would treat him as a "real," empirical object (in particular, the behavioral sciences, but in general, any approach to linguistics, anthropology, sociology, history, or literature that considers its human object from the standpoint of his "real" situation).

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[19] "Elle écrit. C'est à elle que revient le style. Plutot: *si le style était* (comme le pénis serait selon Freud 'le prototype normal du fétiche') *l'homme, l'écriture serait la femme*." Jacques Derrida, "La Question du style," *Nietzsche aujourd'hui?* (Paris: 10/18, 1973), I, 246. Derrida's text, like Nietzsche's and like Freud's, repeats the phallocentric gesture of *defining* woman in opposition to man—that is to say, in terms of male desire: operation which leads, as it does in both the Nietzschean and Freudian texts, 1) to an explicit anti-feminism ("Le féminisme, c'est l'opération par laquelle la femme veut ressembler à l'homme, au philosophe dogmatique, revendiquant la vérité, la science, l'objectivité, c'est-à-dire avec toute l'illusion virile, l'effet de castration qui s'y attache. Le féminisme veut la castration—aussi de la femme. Perd le style." Derrida, "La Question du style," 249); and 2) to man's *identification* with his own (male) image of woman ("J'aimerais bien écrire, aussi. comme [une] femme. J'essaie . . . ," 299).

If the French have rejected humanism, then, it is clearly in the interests of man; it is because humanism (in its illusory insistence of the priority of ideas over both language and reality) has proven inadequate, "impotent," in meeting the threats of the "real world." The deconstruction of humanist values is, in fact—as Hartman quite rightly perceives—a strategy designed to *protect* the Western intellectual tradition (or at least, in Derrida's case, the shreds of its deconstructed remains) from the *real* danger of *destruction* represented by science's (and Marxism's?) "mastery of the world."

The power of a symbolic system derives from the fact that it is, in Hartman's words, "inherent": it is to be found *within* the most incoherent "methodical miscellanies" and "pleasingly ordered chaoses." Science, on the other hand, is logically coherent, but *not* inherent: that is to say, it is closed, exploitative, imposed from without *on* man. But, in reality, I would argue (in part, with Derrida), it is precisely such "symbolic systems" that, for more than twenty centuries, have guaranteed the unquestioned, mutually reinforcing authority of both Science and Metaphysics. And further, it is precisely the *a priori* symbolic laws promulgated by such systems (those, for example, of the ideology that calls itself a "science of language") that represent our last chance, not of *resisting*, but of *salvaging* those "exploitative closures" derived from nineteenth century determinism. It is our last chance of salvaging a reassuringly deterministic world from the wreckage of those unsettling theories which, in actual fact, characterize contemporary "real" science (Einstein's "relativity," Gödel's "undecidability," Heisenberg's "uncertainty," not to mention the theory of "contradiction" that characterizes contemporary Marxist thought).

If one looks at all closely at the way in which the structuralist "symbolic system" functions in the actual practice of literary criticism, the traditional nature of the approach becomes quickly apparent. The meaning of a text, for example, is hardly banished from structuralist criticism (as many Americans had feared); it is, in fact, much easier to determine, since it can be reduced to a very limited number of "master signifiers" or "symbols." And it makes little difference if the meaning is "absent" instead of "present," according to structuralist texts, since "absence," for the structuralists, has the same function as the humanist "presence"—with the added advantage of being impossible to disprove.

Then, if the "consciousness" or the "intention" of an "author" can no longer account for the origin of his work (that was always a messy business in humanist criticism anyway), in a symbolic system, "unconscious desire" invariably steps in to fill the intentional gap. And since for most structuralists, following Lacan, that desire is ultimately a desire "to be" or "to have" the Phallus—then the question of a text's "origin," its "truth," tends to be reduced, however undecidably, to a question of castration.[20]

Furthermore, and perhaps most significantly, if there is no "correspondence" in a symbolic system between language and reality, it is not because language is somehow *inadequate* to describe reality (in which case, one would still be obliged to attempt tracing the connection), but much more frequently because language is presumed to *determine* reality (in which case, there can no longer be a question of correspondence—nor, for that matter, of "reality"). And the problem of representation is closely related to the same question: if the literary text, for example, does not "imitate" or "represent" any *thing* or any *idea*, it is viewed, even more mimetically, as a "repetition" of the symbolic structure that produces it (and hence, ironically, the symbolic realization of Plato's old dream: a perfect imitation of the Idea).[21]

Finally, if the structuralist expresses contempt for the norms and standards by means of which the humanist Anglo-American critic cautiously establishes the relative validity of an interpretation, it is not so much because such criteria illegitimately restrict the free play of meaning (Derrida is clearly an exception here) as it is because they lack the force of structural "laws": laws which, in a symbolic system, have the power to reveal the absolute Truth.

The structuralist critic no longer presents himself as a "judge," who makes admittedly fallible decisions based on the relative weight of available evidence, and in terms of a recognized system of values. He is a "scientist" whose business is to discover the necessary, universal laws governing the production of a text; and/or he is a prophet, who reveals the Truth of a divinely given Law. Indeed, he *cannot* be a judge, since there can be no question of making decisions when one is dealing with necessity, and since there can be no question of making evaluations when one is dealing with a truth that transcends and determines "man."

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[20] The model for this reductionary method of analysis is Lacan's reading of Poe, "Séminaire sur 'La Lettre volée,'" *Ecrits*.

[21] On the notion of repetition, see Lacan, "Suite" to "Le Séminaire sur 'La Lettre volée,'" *Ecrits*.

For values and decisions are always contingent: inescapably ideological, they are enmeshed—like "human" laws—in a complex and ever-changing web of social, cultural and historical "realities." If, however, the laws that organize a text are immutable and universally applicable (within a given linguistic universe), and if those laws are not implicated in that complex web, but rather constitute the very pattern according to which it is woven, then clearly there is no point in questioning the "origin," the "value," or the "justice" of such laws. It is simply a value-free question of discovering what they are, and of remarking how they function.

The power and the attractions of a symbolic system are obvious: not only does it considerably simplify the business of criticism, but it raises criticism to the status of a science and/or gives it the authority of a religion. At a time when the world of traditional humanist values has crumbled, structuralism (and much of post-structuralism) offers the critic a comfortable place and a dignified function in a reassuringly determined symbolic world: a world in which he need make no decisions, and in which his power is nonetheless reaffirmed.

Hartman's question still remains: will the "methodical miscellanies" and the "pleasingly ordered chaoses" of the Humanities, in fact stand any better chance, once we have fit them into such a symbolic system, "of resisting the exploitative or marketing closures of science?" The answer, I would argue, is no. First, because the question of "exploitative and marketing closures" is primarily a *political* question, that is, a question of *values*, which has nothing to do with the "inherent" nature of the sciences (and even literary texts—in the case of a Mandarin system, for example—can become the vehicle of such "closures"). Secondly, because the "the symbolic," as Derrida has so effectively shown, is itself a closed system which would impose precisely such closures on, among other things, literary texts. And thirdly, because—apart from a certain cathartic value for dispossessed humanists—a "symbolic system," in rejecting "the real," has no real power.

4. *Derrida: The Strategy of Indecision*

No one has demonstrated more effectively than Derrida the degree to which the "symbolic systems" of structuralism are dependent on traditional metaphysical assumptions; and no one has argued more forcefully against the narrow, deterministic closures and the rigid, a priori laws such systems would impose on a reading of literary texts.[22] The advantages of Derrida's own critical method, moreover, are enormous. Rarely, in our tradition, has there been a more logically rigorous method of reading so admirably suited to the complexities and the contradictions of literary texts.

Derrida offers the possibility of a criticism that would depend neither on the immanent transcendental " Geist " of the Hegelian tradition, nor, equally important, on the kind of negative theology that characterizes the Heideggerean-existentialist-structuralist tradition (represented today, in France, by Lacanian psychoanalysis). And it is, for that reason, one of the rare modes of criticism able to cope with the radically ambiguous, undecidable meanings and with the open-ended, decentered structures that our tradition—in its contemporary, as well as ancient guises—has always attempted to ignore, deny, reduce, center, limit, subsume or transcend.

Traditional modes of literary criticism—including structuralism—have been based, almost without exception, on the assumptions of classical logic: the law of the excluded middle, the law against contradiction, the laws against infinite regress and petitio principi. And as such, they have always been incapable of adequately accounting for a mode of discourse, like literature, that has traditionally been defined precisey by its license to break those very laws. The traditional solution to the problem (from Plato's *Ion* to the contemporary " prophet-critic "), has always been some form of mysticism: a theory of interpretation based on an " intuition," an inexplicable " force " or " will " which—divinely inspired by God, Nature, Being or Universal Truth—would step in to fill the gaps left by Reason's failure to comprehend.

Derrida, at the very least, offers the possibility of a non-mystical literary criticism, capable nonetheless of dealing with the logical anomalies so characteristic of literature. The logic of " deconstruction," or " dissemination," is, I would argue, a relatively sane, workable logical paradigm, roughly analogous (and all analogies are

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[22] The first part of *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1967), " L'Ecriture avant la lettre," attacks the linguistic foundations of structuralism; the first chapter of Part II (" La Violence de la lettre "), and the article, " Structure, Sign and Play," *The Structuralist Controversy*, are explicit critiques of Lévi-Strauss; " Le Facteur de la vérité," op. cit., argues effectively aaginst Lacan's interpretation of Poe.

"rough" in terms of such a logic) to the indeterminate logic that underlies the development of modern science. (Furthermore, if physicists could accept the notion of "uncertainty" and if mathematicians could accept the notion of "undecidability"—despite dire warnings that such theories destroyed the very basis of their disciplines—there is no reason why literary critics will not eventually accept a similar change of paradigm, based on very much the same logical grounds. We simply have too much to profit.)

But in order to profit from the Derridean text, one must go beyond it. For if Derrida clearly sees the illusory nature of the "power" claimed by the symbolic systems of structuralism, nowhere does he attempt to give a view of power—the power of a philosophy or of a literary criticism—in other terms. If the laws of the symbolic order fail to guarantee the "legitimacy" of the critic's "reproduction" (since the critic's text can, in fact, *never* grasp, and repeat, the structure or the essence of the literary text), then, for Derrida, criticism necessarily loses its authority, its legitimacy: and in the end, it becomes "impotent."

The power of criticism remains, for Derrida—as it does for the structuralists—the power to reproduce the Same, to give an accurate representation of what the text "really *is*"; for if he calls into question the hierarchical order of the opposition (between literature and criticism) upon which the symbolic's claim to power rests, he does *not* call into question the terms of the opposition itself. The question is not, however, as it remains in the Derridean text, simply one of *denying* that power—by demonstrating the inherent contradictions, the "undecidability" of the claims upon which it rests; it is a question of changing the terms in which that "power" is conceived. It is a question of *refusing* to accept the oppositional structure in terms of which notions like "literature" and "criticism" continue—however "undecidably"—to be defined; and it is a question of re-articulating (not merely *dis*-articulating, not merely *de*-constructing) the terms in which the question has been posed. It is a question, finally, of picking and choosing; of selecting and rejecting; of judging, evaluating, deciding: it is, in other words, a question—*the* question—of criticism.

The notion that it is impossible to "escape" the Western system of representation is one of the most common themes of "deconstructive" criticism. And insofar as that notion has been used to demystify the "revolutionary" claims of epistemological systems which are, in fact, quite traditional (structuralism, for example), it has been quite effective; yet, at the same time, it has served to justify a general disavowal of change, leading at once to a denial of history and a refusal to attempt any rearticulation of critical problems. The assumption that systems of representation do not change—and in ways that profoundly alter the structuring principles which underlie them—is in itself astonishingly naive; yet it is on the basis of that assumption that many critics have been misled into supposing that a "crisis of representation" implies the end of representation, or that criticism's failure to give an exact reproduction of the literary text is a sign of its inadequacy and impotence—or that a text can "disseminate" without "reproducing" (and without being itself a "reproduction"). If there is a crisis in criticism today, it is precisely because we—like Derrida—are unable to conceive the consequences of such a radical theoretical change in terms other than those of sterility, or in Derrida's words, of a "terrifying monstrosity."

If Derrida—despite what is, in many ways, his revolutionary logic—remains, as I have indicated earlier, a "conservative thinker" in the end, it is because he is unwilling to suffer the consequences of his own dissemination. It is because his text (and particularly *Glas*, one of his most recent) ends up insisting—in the tragic mode of romantic narcissism—upon its own impotence, its own non-productivity, its own "non-reproducibility." [23]

But if Derrida's text ends in impotence and sterility, it is because—in contradiction to his own logic—Derrida articulates what are the *differences* between "literature" and "philosophy" (or criticism), between "dissemination" and "reproduction," and between "fiction" and "reality," in terms of very traditional (and often very hackneyed) *oppositions*.[24] And as Derrida himself has shown, two opposites "oppose" each other as much, that is to say as little, as two sides of the same coin.

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[23] In *Glas* (Paris: Galilée, 1974), the text is described as a kind of gas which hovers, momentarily, before the "absolute dissolution": "Ce suspens entre le reste et le non-reste, cette suspension du texte qui retarde un peu–il ne faut rien exagérer–*la dissipation absolue*, on pourrait le nommer l'effluve. L'effluve désigne en général des substances organiques *en décomposition*, ou plutot leur produit flottant dans l'air, cette sorte de *gaz* qui se maintient pour un temps au-dessus des marécages, de fluide magnétique aussi. Le text est donc un gaz," p. 70.

Later, Derrida gives an elaborate description of the text as a veil of spit (pp. 160-61). And elsewhere, the "force rare du texte" is said to lie in its undecidability, its "ungraspability"; but that force is "à la limite, nulle," for the "puissance du texte" always remains "en puissance"–that is to say, "inexistante, de rester infiniment en puissance. De s'être condamné à la puissance et d'y rester...Ce que je voulais écrire, c'est POTENCE du texte" (what he *wanted* to write, but could not), p. 233.

Whatever privilege one might grant to "heads" or to "tails" (and clearly, in our tradition, the preference is for "heads"), the value of the coin remains the same, symbolically speaking, on the marketplace of ideas. The opposition literally "makes no difference" in the reproduction and in the exchange of signification (that is, of course, precisely its function—to make nothing of differences, to make *difference* the *same*).

But if deconstruction ultimately winds up serving the very logic of opposition it challenges, it is because, in the end, it makes no difference whether one presents one side of the argument or the other, *or* whether, recognizing that such a decision inevitably involves contradiction, one suspends judgment and presents the case as an undecidable toss-up: the value of the terms—their place and their function within the economy of meaning—is not affected. That is to say affirmed, since not to question its value, the value of the place it occupies in a given discourse, is to accept the value and the significance of the place claimed by its terms. To reproduce uncritically the structure of a given opposition (whether by inversion or by suspension) is to reinforce and to perpetuate the system of values within which it functions.

In the concordia of a discors, or in the discordia of a concors, what remains—however deconstructed—is the same "cor": a core that cannot be questioned, moreover, in terms of the opposition, since to put the value of the "cor" into question is to *destroy* the opposition. And that is why even those who today recognize (like Derrida, following Freud and Nietzsche) the fundamental collusion of the opposition's poles—the inherently contradictory, undecidable play between the two—avoid, in general the most interesting question: the question of the *interest* and the *value* of the terms in which the opposition is articulated. (The interest, for example, today, in articulating the difference between the sexes in terms of an opposition between castration and anti-castration—which is a phallocentric gesture *not* because it asserts the priority of the former, but because it *defines* the latter *in terms of* the former.[25] Or, the interest, today, of articulating the differences between philosophico-critical discourse and literary discourse in terms of a series of classical oppositions between rational/irrational, decidable/undecidable, clear/ambiguous, masculine/feminine, true/false, reality/fiction, science/art, description/creation, imitation/invention.) For if the wise critic knows today, that such oppositions offer only the illusion of a choice, the question of the choice of terms remains decided, in the frozen suspension of his undecidable textual web.

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[24] For Derrida's critique of oppositional logic, see "Positions," *Diacritics*, 2, No. 4 (1972), 35-36, and the Hegel side of *Glas* where Derrida constantly attacks Hegel's strategy of transforming "difference" into "opposition."

It is the *necessity* of those terms, and the *necessity* of the oppositional structure in terms of which they are articulated, that it is necessary, today, to call into question. If we no longer ask how many angels fit on the head of a pin, it is not because the question has been satisfactorily answered; nor is it because we have stoically reconciled ourselves to the impossibility of finding an answer; nor is it even, for that matter, because we have joyfully affirmed an infinity of contradictory possibilities. It is because, quite simply, the question is no longer of interest; it no longer concerns us; it is a question that, for us, today, has little if any value.

If the Derridean text is unable to account for such a question, it is because the Derridean text remains locked, undecidably, in the logic of opposition/identity it calls into question. And because it remains locked in that logic, it is incapable, on a theoretical level at least, of admitting the category of *choice*, or *decision*: for where it is a question of opposition, it cannot be a question of choice—since the two poles of an opposition, however irreconcilable, are always mutually implicit and mutually dependent.

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[25] In "La Question du style," Derrida quite rightly points out that "la vérité-castration" is "l'affaire de l'homme"; woman, Derrida realizes, does not believe in castration. But, Derrida immediately adds, "*La 'femme' a besoin de l'effet de castration, sans lequel elle ne saurait séduire ni ouvrir le désir.*" And further, the tone becoming even more oppressively magisterial, "*Est 'femme' ce qui n'y croit pas qui en joue*" ("La Question du style," 248; my emphasis). The "woman" who *doesn't* play the game of castration (which Derrida himself has defined as *man's* game)–the woman whose desire is not directed toward seducing man, toward playing the object (fetish) of his desire–is a woman without a man: the feminist who, according to Derrida, has lost "les style." And the woman who doesn't want to *have* a man is necessarily–for Derrida, no less than for the tradition he claims to "deconstruct"–a woman who wants *to be* a man. We are far from the "glas" of phallocentrism in the Derridean text.

Or perhaps, rather, it is the desire to *avoid* making choices—in particular, a choice that would involve rejecting certain traditional interests and values— that leads Derrida to the impotence of undecidability. For here, as elsewhere (and one can see the same notion at work in the concepts of " deconstruction " and " differance," for example), the contradictions Derrida so consistently and coherently articulates, express, as always (in Derrida's own words) the " force of a desire."[26] And in Derrida's case, that desire is a desire to radically challenge the Western Tradition without doing it any harm; to *preserve* that tradition—in its entirety—while destroying all the reasons to preserve it.

The problems which I have just indicated find their most dramatic formulation in *Glas*, but they are evident throughout the Derridean text. And one can see them at work even in Derrida's earliest works—for example, in the article for which he is no doubt best known in this country, " Structure, Sign and Play."

At the end of the article, Derrida outlines two possible modes of interpretation: one, the structuralist, which " seeks to decipher, dreams of deciphering, a truth of an origin which is free from freeplay "; the other, the Nietzschean, "which is no longer turned toward the origin, affirms freeplay and tries to pass beyond man and humanism" (264). Since this is an article which is, generally speaking, highly critical of structuralism, the reader understandably identifies Derrida's own critical work with the latter: and not without reason.

But Derrida goes on to say, in the following passage, that although these two are " irreconcilable," there is no question of " *choosing* " (Derrida's emphasis) between them (265). And Derrida gives us two reasons for not choosing between the structuralists' " ethic of nostalgia for origins " and the Nietzschean affirmation of a loss of center: first, he says, because today, " *the category of choice seems particularly trivial* "; and secondly, " because we must first try to conceive of the common ground, and the *differance* of this irreducible difference." [27]

But if the category of choice seems " trivial " to Derrida, it is precisely *because* he sees the difference(s) between Levi-Strauss and Nietzsche, between structuralism and deconstruction—(as he sees the difference between literature and philosophy, or between man and woman)—in terms of what he calls " differANCE." [28] And to see two elements in terms of their "differance" is to see them in terms of a relation according to which the one (say, structuralism) merely "defers" or "puts off" the other (say, deconstruction)—another which is already there, within it; and correspondingly, according to which the other is merely the "deferral" (the logical outcome, as it were) of what was "always already" there in the one. It is to see differences, all in maintaining their difference, as the same; it is to see, with the addition of a temporal framework (in order to keep—artificially—the distance between the two poles, in order to prevent the dissolution of their differences), what bears more than an uncanny resemblance to the old identity of opposites.

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[26] "Structure, Sign and Play," p. 248.

[27] Derrida, " Structure, Sign and Play," p. 248.

[28] In the English version, " différance " is translated simply as " difference," ibid., p. 265. See " La Structure, le signe et le jeu," *L'Ecriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), p. 428 and his essay " La Différence " in the same volume.

It is extremely ironic that Derrida should be considered, by many, to be a "destructive" critic: for the major problem of the Derridean text lies precisely in his refusal to destroy anything. In the Derridean text, everything remains, nothing is forgotten, nothing is discarded. When Lucien Goldmann, in the discussion that follows "Structure, Sign and Play," charges that Derrida's work is "destructive," Derrida responds, and quite rightly, by categorically denying the charge: "I believe that I was quite explicit about the fact that nothing of what I said had a destructive meaning" (p. 270). He goes on to underline the distinction, made in a number of texts, between "deconstruction" and "destruction": deconstruction "is simply a question of . . . being alert to the implications, to the historical sedimentations of the language we use—and that is not destruction" (p. 270). Derrida's work, then, his deconstruction of Western philosophy, emphatically "has nothing to do with destruction."

But he adds, curiously enough, that a radically critical work like his own, may very well have to do with "sterility"; indeed, that the "risk of sterility and sterilization has always been the price of lucidity" (p. 271). If there is indeed no question of *destroying* the Western tradition, there is nonetheless a very important question of the critic's ability to contribute to it, to change it, to modify it.

One finds the same curious link between the impossibility of destruction and the impossibility of "reproduction" in the concluding passage of the article referred to above. For it is precisely at the moment when Derrida is unable to face the possibility of any "choice"—that is, to conceive of the possibility of *rejecting* structuralism (which would be a form, precisely, of *destruction*)—that he is unable to conceive of his own work producing any recognizable results:

> Here there is a sort of question, call it historical, of which we are only glimpsing today the *conception*, the *formation*, the *gestation*, the *labor* [D's emphasis]. I employ these words, I admit, with a glance toward the business of childbearing—but also with a glance toward those who, in a company from which I do not exclude myself, turn their eyes away in the face of the as yet unnameable which is proclaiming itself and which can do so, as is necessary whenever a birth is in the offing, only under the species of the non-species, in the formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity. (265)

If, in the concluding sentence of the article, Derrida (like Socrates) compares his work to a process of "childbearing," his last word is a refusal to recognize the child; and along with most French and American critics, he "turns his eyes away" from the "as yet unnameable" offspring of deconstruction, since it can only be conceived in the "terrifying form of monstrosity."

The image of a "monstrous birth" also appears in the preface to the *Grammatology*, where it is again the only form in which the offspring of this new style of writing can be conceived.[29] And in the subsequent elaboration of Derrida's work (*La Dissemination*, *Marges*, *Glas*), the "child"—far from taking on any shape or form—becomes progressively less and less conceivable, however "monstrous" the form, until finally, in *Glas*, nothing is "conceived" but a fetish.

The militant defense of fetishism one finds in *Glas* is, in a way, the logical consequence of the distinction Derrida makes earlier (especially in *La Dissémination*) between "dissemination" and "reproduction" (a distinction, which, in turn, is a logical consequence of the "terrifyingly monstrous birth").[30] Unlike the style of traditional philosophy—a style designed to "reproduce" as faithfully as possible ideas which themselves are "reproductions of" reality—the "disseminating" style of Derridean écriture would not "reproduce" anything at all. Like the holiday farmer of Plato's *Phaedrus*, Derrida claims, the writer would haphazardly "disseminate" his deconstructive semes; and in terms of the metaphor, seeds scattered in such a way—arbitrarily, without cultivation—can produce, at best, an occasional flower.[31] But the flowers are sterile: they can bear no fruit.

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[29] "L'avenir ne peut s'anticiper que dans la forme du danger absolu. Il est ce qui rompt absolument avec la normalité constituée et ne peut donc s'annoncer, se présenter, que sous l'espèce de la monstruosité," p. 14.

[30] See *Glas*, for Derrida's defense of fetishism, pp. 235-39, and especially pp. 249-56 (in the Genet column); also pp. 230-36 (in the Hegel column). Derrida criticizes the various attempts made to destroy "fetishism," and on the basis of Freud's article on fetishism, goes on to develop what he calls a "general economy of fetishism."

In accepting the terms of the metaphor, however, Derrida falls into Plato's trap: for Socrates is *not* so much trying to convince Phaedrus that one pole of the opposition (fruit, fertility, serious farmer, reproduction) is *superior* to the other (flower, sterility, playful farmer, dissemination); he is trying to convince Phaedrus that speech and writing, like poetry and philosophy, are not merely *different*, but that they are *opposites*—and that the opposition between them can be articulated precisely in terms of oppositions such as fertility/sterility, serious/play, dissemination/reproduction, etc. For the "fertility" in question here has to do with the rhetorical efficacy, the persuasiveness, of a given mode of discourse; and it is by no means taken for granted, in the Platonic text, that the seeds of poetic dissemination bear no fruit. Indeed, if poetry is so dangerous, it is precisely because poetry *does* reproduce a certain reality (a bad, unfaithful, false reality) which can all too easily be implanted in the minds of its listeners, and lead to the reproduction of still other rotten fruits.

Yet while Derrida calls into question philosophy's claim to give a "faithful reproduction of reality," he never questions the claim (or rather defense) that poetry merely disseminates pure "fiction." As in the case of the opposition between dissemination and reproduction, Derrida operates a simple inversion of the traditional hierarchical order, here with regard to the opposition between "philosophy" (as the discourse of reality) and "literature" (as the discourse of fictions).

However much Derrida may speak, in theory, of "deconstructing" the opposition between literature and philosophy, literature enjoys a privileged status in the practice of the Derridean text. In *Glas*, what remains, after the deconstruction of philosophy (and Hegel represents in a sense, for Derrida, the summum of Western Philosophy), is literature: a literature defined, to be sure, not in traditional terms, but as "écriture" (which, taken generally, in Derrida's sense, includes all forms of writing; but, more narrowly, it refers to those forms of writing which manifestly subvert, or at least resist, the laws of traditional logic—primarily literary texts, but also certain "philosophical" texts, like those of Nietzsche, Bataille, and Derrida himself). But it is a literature—like Aristotle's, like Freud's, like Nietzsche's—radically divorced from "reality." The world of literature is an uncanny world of fictions and fantasies, of imaginary pleasures and terrors, of ephemeral beauties and of impossible monstrosities, a world in which hymens are never "really" broken, in which seeds are disseminated without anyone ever getting pregnant, in which people die of laughter—or live to declare their own deaths.[32]

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[31] Derrida, "La Pharmacie de Platon," *La Dissémination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972).

For Derrida, as for Lacan, literature serves the function of a fetish (their disagreement concerns only the definition of the fetish—rigidly determined, for the one, undecidable for the other.) As such, it serves, in a non-traditional, undecidable way, the very traditional function of catharsis: which in this case is to give the assurance, by definition false (and hence only "undecidably" reassuring), that the "castration" or the "impotence" of the Western Tradition (the castration of which literature, as fetish, is a sign), is somehow not "real." [33] Which leads one to the comforting conclusion that if deconstruction is the privilege of the literary text, then deconstruction never "really" threatens anything at all.

In spite of the privileged position he grants literature, however, Derrida remains a philosopher; and just as one has good reasons to be suspicious of the "privilege" accorded a woman who is placed on a pedestal, one has good reason to be suspicious of the privilege Derrida grants literature. For the privilege can only be granted *by* philosophy, and on philosophy's terms: and those terms, from the time Plato banished the poets, have always been precisely the same—that literature above all make no claim to "reproduce reality." Derrida's notion of literature—like Plato's, like Aristotle's and again like Freud's and like Nietzsche's—is conceived in traditional philosophical terms (or, and it is the same thing, the terms of psychoanalysis); that is to say, it is conceived *by* philosophy and *for* philosophy as philosophy's *Other*: as that which eludes philosophy's grasp, that which precedes philosophy and survives its deconstruction, that which both threatens and attracts it, castrates and consoles it.

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[32] On the notion of "hymen" and "death-by laughter," see Derrida's discussion of Mallarmé in "La Double séance," *La Dissémination*; on the notion of "dissemination," see "La Pharmacie de Platon." In *Glas*, Derrida announces his own death ("Je suis *déjà* [mort]") and then adds, with remarkable insight: "En même temps, à me retrancher, à soustraire ma présence, à mourir, j'échappe aux coups....Toutes les fleurs de rhétorique dans lesquelles je disperse ma signature, dans lesquelles je m'apostrophe et m'apotrope, *lisez-les aussi comme des formes de refoulement. Il s'agit de repousser la pire menace et pour cela, d'avance, de soi-meme, se retrancher*" (p. 97, my emphasis).

[33] "Si j'écris deux textes à la fois," Derrida writes, "*vous ne pourrez pas me châtrer*. Si je délinéarise, j'érige, Mais en même temps, je devise mon acte et mon désir. Je–marque la division et vous échappant toujours, je simule sans cesse et ne jouis nulle part. *Je me châtre moi-meme...*" (*Glas*, p. 77, my emphasis). Later, in speaking of the "economy of the undecidable," Derrida betrays the same strategy: "*La feinte consiste à faire semblant de perdre*, de se châtrer, de se donner la mort pour y couper. Mais la feinte n'y coupe pas. On perd des deux côtés, dans les deux registres, à savoir jouer sur les deux tableaux" (*Glas*, pp. 235-36, my emphasis).

Literature, for Derrida, is at once the Medusa who petrifies the philosopher and renders him impotent, the whore who has unjustly suffered the indignities of philosophical exploitation, and the Virgin Mother (the image is taken from *Glas*) who lives to mourn the crucifixion of her immaculately conceived, only-begotten son.[34] Literature is all that philosophy is not: origin of origins, itself without origin, it is non-deconstructable, its style is unique and inimitable, disseminating and non-reproducible. The philosopher's dream and/or nightmare, his consolation and/or anguish.

It is Derrida's definition of literature in traditional (romantic) terms—in opposition to philosophy—that leads, in *Glas*, to a "crisis of criticism." For in *Glas*, the deconstruction of Hegel (centered, appropriately enough, on Hegel's theory of the family—that is, his theory of "reproduction") can lead only to the self-conscious failure of the critic's (philosopher's) attempt to "reproduce" Genet, ending in the impotence and sterility of a criticism that is always already read *by*, comprehended *by* the literary text it seeks to comprehend.[35]

[34] Derrida compares the critical act to the operation of a crane dredging up rocks and algae from the ocean floor: "Ai-je construit quelque chose comme la matrice de son (Genet's) texte? A partir de laquelle on pourrait le lire, c'est-à-dire le re-produire? Non, je vois plutot. . .une sorte de machine à draguer. . .la matrice dentée ne retire que ce qu'elle peut, des algues, des pierres. Des morceaux, puisqu'elle mord. Détachés. Mais le reste lui passe entre les dents, entre les lèvres"; Genet's text, the literary text, is the "mer/mère" (maternal image par excellence), and as Derrida says, "*On ne prend pas la mer. Elle se reforme toujours. Elle reste. Là, égale, calme. Intacte, impassible, toujours vierge*" (*Glas*, p. 229, my emphasis).

[35] This is one of the basic arguments of "Le Facteur de la vérité," where it is used against Lacan, and in *Glas*, where it is used both against Bataille's reading of Genet ("Rappelez-vous, c'est lui qui vous lit") and against his own: "Je suis donc de toute façon jugé et condamné, c'est ce qu'il a toujours cherché à

But what makes Derrida such an extraordinarily powerful critic of both literary and philosophical texts, is precisely the fact that he *does* reproduce them: not *the* Genet, not *the* Mallarmé, to be sure, but *a* Genet, *a* Mallarmé, *a* Nietzsche, *a* Plato (as Hartman and de Man reproduce *a* Derrida, although the offspring can hardly be said to resemble each other). And like all good critics, he does so by selecting certain texts, certain passages, and excluding certain others; by drawing certain implications, emphasizing certain values, and by ignoring certain others; by deciding what is of interest in the text (its " undecidability," for example) and what is not (its reactionary political implications, for example): in brief, by making certain *judgments* about the text in terms of a certain set of *values*. And since the critic's values and interests are never identical to those of the " author " and since, in any case, the values and the interests of a writer, including those of Derrida, are caught up in a complex, infinitely regressive, contradictory, fluctuating web—then there can be no question, for the critic, of remaining " faithful " to the text, and of somehow reproducing an offspring that would be the true image and likeness of its parent.

Post-structuralism, then, no less than structuralism, depends on a number of false assumptions about literature, about criticism and about the relationship between the two. First among these is the assumption of the " primacy " of literature—as a disseminating, and consequently non-reproducible *and* non-deconstructable, mode of discourse—and of the consequent " secondariness " of criticism, or philosophy. False, because in reality, what we call " literature " and what we call " literary criticism " are simply two different styles, or modes of discourse: neither " essentially " the same *nor* the opposite, but rather two styles that overlap and diverge, that mutually influence and modify one another . . . both disseminating, both reproducing, more or less differently.

Equally important, if not more so, is the assumption made with regard to the function of criticism: that is, the notion (as characteristic of positivism and behaviorism as it is of New Criticism, structuralism and post-structuralism) that the function of criticism is, above all, *not* to *choose*, not to make *value judgments*, but rather to try (however it might fail) to give a disinterested, inclusive, value-free

faire: si j'écris contre lui, si j'écris pour lui, j'écris contre son texte " (*Glas*, pp. 248, 224).

account of the text. Whether one posits (as do structuralists) the ideal of a "value-free science," or whether one promotes (as do post-structuralists) a "devaluation of values," the same assumption is at work: that criticism *should* (and to a certain extent, at least, *can*) cleanse itself of the always-tainted interests and values it represents; and that criticism should (and to a certain extent can) either 1) avoid, in the interests of fairness and of Truth, judging the interests and values represented by the texts it considers, or 2) (by far the more clever strategy) demonstrate that the text, in fact, whitewashes itself— by undecidably affirming and negating its own values.

But criticism is of interest, I would argue, precisely because it does, in fact, make value judgments; indeed, I would argue even further, that making value judgments is, in fact, precisely the *function* of criticism. And if critics continue to write criticism, in spite of a "crisis" which would logically reduce them to silence, it is because the function of criticism—that is, of making value judgments about some "reality" (social, historical, literary)—is a necessary function of any society.

ANNE K. MELLOR*

On Romantic Irony, Symbolism and Allegory

Critical debate on the nature of literary discourse—and particularly on the nature of Romantic literature—has centered recently around the polar positions exemplified by Meyer Abrams and Paul de Man. Abrams, in his masterful *Natural Supernaturalism* and elsewhere, argues forcefully that romantic discourse is founded on a commitment to symbolism, on the belief that language can adequately image a spiritual truth attained by the visionary poet during his circuitous journey of ever-increasing consciousness. In contradiction, Paul de Man insists in several seminal essays that a symbolic discourse predicated on such ontological claims is both historically, for the nineteenth century, and theoretically, as an epistemological position, a " blindness " or mystification that must be corrected. In this essay, I wish to suggest a way of thinking about this debate that may lead to a theoretical reconciliation of these apparently contradictory approaches. Friedrich Schlegel's concept of romantic irony, properly understood, offers both historically and theoretically a way to embrace both Abrams' " constructive " and de Man's " deconstructive " approaches. Therefore, after briefly analysing Abrams' and, more extensively, de Man's arguments, I shall invoke Schlegel's formulations as a possible solution to what has come to seem a critical stalemate in romantic interpretation.

Both Abrams and de Man derive the conceptual terms of their critical theory from Kant's famous antinomies, the ineradicable division of the phenomenal from the noumenal world. Abrams follows Fichte and Hegel in arguing that this division can be overcome by the conviction that, crudely stated, consciousness *is* the *ding-an-sich*. In other words, the world is mind (Fichte's Ego) and language is the " spousal verse " that records the authentic meeting of the individual imagination with universal consciousness.[1] For Abrams, as for Wordsworth, language is " natural ": it performs and records the cultural

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[1] M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971). As Abrams points out, this universal consciousness is variously imaged by Romantic writers, as Blake's Energy or Imagination, as Coleridge's Spirit or One Life, as Wordsworth's " mighty Mind," as Shelley's unseen Power, as Carlyle's " divine Chaos," etc.

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interactions between human beings and their environment.[2] Symbolic discourse is thus predicated on, and reveals, the achieved synthesis of the subject with the object. That Abrams never seriously doubts the ontological validity of a highly conscious, symbolic discourse is suggested by his omission from *Natural Supernaturalism* of all discussion of the sceptical Byron, Friedrich Schlegel and Romantic irony. Clearly, Abrams has chosen to privilege mythopoeic creation at the expense of ironic scepticism.

Paul de Man takes the opposite tack. Confronted with the Kantian antinomy, he insists upon the absolute unknowability of the noumenal world. Instead, he asserts that language is a self-enclosed system from which human consciousness cannot escape. The only truth that man can ever know is the ironic awareness of the falsity of all linguistic or conceptual constructions or " mystifications " describing the empirical world. But de Man's position is itself a form of " mystification " or arbitrary privileging of one mental process, ironic deconstruction, over another, symbolic creation. Since de Man does not openly admit that he is privileging certain texts or forms of literary discourse, we must carefully examine his writing to see this process at work. I have chosen to focus upon de Man's influential essay " The Rhetoric of Temporality " [3] both because it most clearly privileges allegory at the expense of symbolism and because it invokes Friedrich Schlegel's concept of Romantic irony in a misleading way. A deconstruction of this particular essay will therefore lead directly to the point I wish to stress, namely the usability of Schlegel's Romantic irony as a resolution of the critical polarization between symbolism and irony.

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[2] For the concept of a " natural " language, see Charles Altieri's fine discussion of Wordsworth's anticipation of Wittgenstein's theory of language as an activity, in " Wordsworth's ' Preface ' as Literary Theory," *Criticism*, 18 (1976), 122-46. This essay contains a critique of de Man's idealist position, which is expanded in Altieri's comments on de Man's " ' radical relativist ' position on indeterminacy " in " The Hermeneutics of Literary Indeterminacy: A Dissent from the New Orthodoxy," *New Literary History*, 10 (1978), 71-99.

[3] Paul de Man, " The Rhetoric of Temporality," in *Interpretation: Theory and Practice*, ed. Charles S. Singleton (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), pp. 173-209 (hereafter all page references to this essay will be cited in the text in brackets). De Man's radical scepticism and consequent affirmation of a self-conscious irony occurs in most of his writing, from his unpublished doctoral thesis (*Mallarmé, Yeats and the Post-Romantic Predicament*, Harvard University, 1960) through the essays collected in *Blindness and Insight* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) to such recent articles as " Nietzsche's Theory of Rhetoric," *Symposium*, 28 (1974), 33-51; " Action and Identity in Nietzsche," *Yale French Studies*, 52 (1975), pp. 16-30; and " The Purloined Ribbon," *Glyph*, 1 (1977), 28-49. De Man's concept of allegorical discourse derives primarily from Walter Benjamin's *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (1928; *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne, London: NLB, 1977), although de Man dispenses with the Hebraic theology that leads Benjamin to identify allegory with evil.

Paul de Man begins his essay by calling into question the "supremacy of the symbol, conceived as an expression of unity between the representative and the semantic function of language" (175). Implicitly—and later explicitly—de Man assumes that there is a necessary disjunction between "experience and the representation of experience" (174), between nature and language. Poetic assertions of an achieved identity between subject and object are thus for him "illusory" (191), an historical "error" (194) that his essay is designed to correct. De Man later broadens his attack to include another, historically parallel, mystification: nineteenth-century realism or, more generally, "a mimetic mode of representation in which fiction and reality could coincide" (204). For de Man, mimesis—the accurate reflection of nature in art—is no longer possible after the eighteenth century. De Man's assumption that both symbolism and mimesis are now in error is based on a prior assumption, that there is an unbridgeable gulf between the subjective self that changes and dies and is thereby confined to a purely temporal condition—and that objective nature which endures and hence has a "temporal stability" (184). Here de Man casts his argument in terms of temporal stability and instability. He thereby begs the question whether the objective world, whose animals, plants, minerals and man-made artifacts all perish in time, is in fact ontologically different from the human condition. In subsequent essays, de Man has rightly shifted the ground of his argument to the necessary "figurality" of language itself. Trapped in the prisonhouse of language, the conscious mind can never cross over to the realm of unconsciousness.

On the basis of these unexamined assumptions, de Man then proceeds to privilege one form of literary discourse, the allegoric, over another, the symbolic. Resorting to a series of valorizing metaphors, de Man asserts that allegory—whose signs always refer to anterior signs, whose texts derive their meaning from other literary texts, and which thus inhabits a purely linguistic context—is "the unveiling of an authentically temporal destiny" (190). Symbolism, in contrast, attempts to embody linguistically the identification of the subject with an other, rather than the "relationship of the subject with itself" (180). De Man thereupon portrays symbolic diction as a powerful "seductiveness" (190). It is a "temptation" (188) whose "renunciation" (189) requires a "sacrifice" (189) of personal comfort that is nonetheless required by truth. De Man's puritanical imagery implicitly casts the battle between allegory and symbolism as a moral psychomachia. The victory of a satanic symbolism can only be regarded as the triumph of a never "entirely good poetic conscience" (191). The historical substitution of the term "symbol" for "allegory" was a hypocritical deception, an act of "ontological bad faith"(194). Other metaphors extend this struggle between allegory and symbolism from the moral to the epistemological realm. Symbolism is an historical "error" (194). It is a self-induced blindness that functions as a "defensive strategy that tries to hide from this negative self-knowledge" (191), the knowledge that the self and the non-self cannot be joined. Thus it is a "veil thrown over a light that one no longer wishes to perceive" (191). Having summoned truth and justice to his side, de Man proclaims the "impossibility" of reconciling or denying the Kantian "antinomies between the created world and the act of creation" (190) after the Enlightenment. He then condemns man to the prisonhouse of language: man must remain forever confined within a nexus of signs that refer solely to other, anterior signs, in a language established "in the void of this temporal difference" (191).

In the second part of his essay, de Man proceeds to mystify irony. He confidently asserts that an ironic *dédoublement* is the only authentic truth. The ironist is always conscious of the distinction between his empirical self (acting in the natural world) and his separated, observing self. This multiple consciousness, this "reflective disjunction" (196) between two selves, is rendered possible only through language. Indeed, the second, self-conscious self exists only in a "world constituted out of, and in, language"; it even "becomes like a sign in its attempt at differentiation and self-definition" (196). De Man's psychomachia goes on. Invoking Baudelaire, he portrays the self's entry into an ironic doubling as a fall. But in de Man's narrative, this is a fortunate fall, out of a naive unselfconsciousness into a "progression in self-knowledge" (196). Moreover, this fall atones for the primal sin of "pride" (196)—the sin of self-mystification—and thus frees the ironist to gain moral redemption and a higher wisdom.

De Man grants that a constant process of ironic self-demystification (in which "the self is unravelled and comes apart . . . at an unsettling speed" [197]) is frightening and can finally lead only to madness, albeit a *folie lucide* (198). For the authentic ironist can never engage in the creative process, in the construction of a mystification. To move from an ironic detachment and sceptical analysis of the delusions of the imagination to the making of a fiction, to a "mimetic mode of representation in which fiction and reality . . . coincide" (204), is not only a historical "regression" (204) in de Man's view: it is also impossible. For the minute irony forsakes its function of criticism and analysis; it "runs dry" (200), as de Man's discussion of Hoffmann's *Prinzessin Brambilla* emphasizes. At this point, de Man invokes Friedrich Schlegel's concepts of irony as a permanent parabasis and of the irony of irony. In de Man's view, Schlegel confirms that all fictions are essentially negative or false and that there "is no way back" (201) from the authentically ironic self to the empirical self.

Rather than celebrate the terrifying process of gaining self-knowledge only at the cost of going mad, de Man finally suggests that a healthier wisdom may be achieved by combining an ironic self-demystification with a figurative language that does not deny man's inherently temporal condition. Seeking a resting point in the "narrowing spiral" (203) of purely linguistic reference, de Man chooses a final mystification, the "allegory of irony" (209). Invoking Wordsworth's *A slumber did my spirit seal* . . . and Stendhal's *Chartreuse de Parme*, de Man affirms that an authentic truth and self can only be preserved in a figural language that describes the fall of the self into a consciousness either of its own mortality or of its inevitable isolation from other selves in the void of temporality. One could quarrel with de Man's reading of Wordsworth's poem here. Perhaps for Wordsworth a death in which the human body is united with "trees" as well as rocks and stones in the "diurnal course" of nature's fertile seasons is more than the "rocky barrenness" (206) de Man sees. Perhaps the "slumber" that sealed the poet's spirit is not a "condition of non-awareness" (205) but rather death itself, the death that has sealed, as in a coffin, both Lucy's and synecdochically the poets's soul or spirit. Perhaps the temporal progression in the poem is that from the moment of death (when the poet "had no earthly fears") to the condition of being dead (when the poet's self-consciousness is once again absorbed into nature and accepts that loss of individuality equanimitably). Such an alternative reading would equate "my spirit" with "she" and confer on both a kind of immortality (all "human fears" of death, of non-being, are gone).

Whether one chooses de Man's 'negative' reading of the poem as a temporal progression from a mystified life of delusive happiness ("I had no human fears") to a fall into the consciousness that all selves must die and lose their individuality to a " rocky barrenness " of sterile death, or the " positive " reading suggested above, one is choosing between two sets of signs. One must therefore recognize that de Man's equation of authentic or ontological truth with a belief in the " void of temporality " is itself a linguistic construction and hence a mystification. For Friedrich Schlegel long ago identified as a fiction the Kantian antinomy that de Man assumes to be ontological fact.

To understand Schlegel's critique of Kant, we must briefly recapitulate the Kantian dilemma. Kant had theoretically divided the universe into two realms, the noumenon (the *ding-an-sich* or the world as it actually is) and the phenomenon (the world as it is perceived by the human mind). He had further insisted that these two realms are not, and can never be, the same. The very act of perception is a mental process of structuring or organizing sensory data; the mind thus responds, not to raw sense-data, but to already categorized experience. Human cognition is thus limited to categorized experience, what Kant called *Verstand*. This realm is necessarily finite, because it is limited materially to specific concrete experiences and formally to a knowledge of the mental structures or categories of all possible experiences.

Since biologically the human mind is so designed that it can receive sensory information only through the categories or structures that it imposes upon experience (post-Kantians, like de Man, conceive these structures as languages), it followed for Kant that the subject can only truly know what it itself makes, structures, or forms. (Hence comes de Man's conviction that language and experience must always be separate and that the authentic self can exist only in and through language.) In the case of man, all such knowledge must be finite. Because human knowledge is not infinite and therefore not self-caused, Kant held that man's " sensible intuitions " must be caused by an external being, the noumenal world. Insofar as the human mind attempts to transcend the realm of phenomenal, structured experience, insofar as it tries to discover the noumenon and to come into contact with the unconditioned basis for the conditional, it functions as what Kant called " pure reason " or *Vernunft*. Pure reason has developed such unexperienceable ideas as totality and infinity.

The dual functioning of *Verstand* and *Vernunft* leads to a contradiction, the famous Kantian antinomy. The human mind must simultaneously affirm both the existence of an unconditioned, free first cause and the fact that there is no completed causal series in nature and hence no freedom. For Kant, this contradiction demonstrated the invalidity of pure reason's attempt to ascertain any truth about the noumenon. It is crucial to see here that Kant has accepted the Aristotelian principle of contradiction (A=A; A≠not-A) not only as a structural category determining the way the human mind functions but also as a constitutive principle of the noumenon itself. He further assumed that the category of causality applies not only to the unending causal series of the phenomenal world but to the constitutive relationship between the noumenal and the phenomenal world (i.e., the noumenal world, the thing in itself, causes our perceptions of it). Since Kant firmly believed that the world could not be both free and not free, and that freedom could not cause non-freedom, he resolved these contradictions by denying the validity of any human or finite understanding of the world as it actually is, even though he acknowledged the *moral* necessity for postulating the existence of a noumenal realm in which God functions as first cause and as the ultimate authority for the categorical imperative.[4]

Kant thus left his followers with a human desire to know the absolute, the *ding-an-sich*, that can never be satisfied. This can easily lead to despair, as it did in the dramas of Heinrich von Kleist where humanity is imprisoned in its own finitude and feels always incomplete, frustrated, inadequate; where one finally ends in psychic atrophy. In an attempt to save humanity from such despair, Fichte criticized Kant's limitation of human knowledge to what can be known from "sensible intuitions." He argued that the mind was capable of an "intellectual intuition" in which it has a direct experience of the infinite. In his *Theory of Knowledge* (1794), Fichte asserted that Kant's noumenal world does not exist, that human consciousness creates his own universe (the Ego posits itself). Further, the Ego itself creates its antithesis, the Non-Ego (what I am not) or finite world, in order to stimulate the Ego to greater creativity and an expanding consciousness that alone constitutes the experience of freedom. But Fichte thereby denied the reality of an external, no-self-created, objective world. The burning question for Friedrich Schlegel, who was influenced by Spinoza's conviction that an objective, external reality exists, therefore was: "How can the finite world of sensible knowledge (the phenomenal realm) and the infinite world of pure being (the noumenal realm) be brought together?"

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[4] For further discussion of Kant's impact on Schlegel's thought, see the fine essay by Leonard P. Wessell, Jr., "The Antinomic Structure of Friedrich Schlegel's 'Romanticism,'" *Studies in Romanticism*, 12 (1973), 648-69, to which I am much indebted.

Philosophical irony is Schlegel's attempt to answer this question and resolve the Kantian antinomy. This concept is founded on Kant's assertions that the noumenon is necessarily incomprehensible and that the relationship between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds is necessarily contradictory. Schlegel translates Kant's assertion into an ontological principle: the universe is essentially a chaos. "Isn't this entire, unending world constructed by the understanding out of incomprehensibility or chaos?" he asks rhetorically in his essay "On Incomprehensibility."[5] And in his *Dialogue on Poetry*, he confirms, "the highest beauty, indeed the highest order, is yet only that of chaos . . . ."[6] Schlegel conceived this noumenal chaos as a fertile abundance or *Fülle*, which he glossed thus: "By Abundance (*Fülle*) I must here be understood to mean, the exhaustless fund of life which is constantly developing itself in nature, in matchless but evergrowing beauty."[7] He continued, "The most prominent characteristic of nature is an everflowing and exhaustless vital energy."[8] This creative chaos becomes, in Schlegel's *Dialogue on Poetry*, identical with poetry itself:

> The world of poetry is as infinite and inexhaustible as the riches of animating nature with her plants, animals, and formations of every type, shape, and color. Nor are the artificial or natural products which bear the form and name of poems easily included under the most inclusive term. And what are they, compared with the unformed and unconscious poetry which stirs in the plant and shines in the light, smiles in a child, gleams in the flower of youth, and glows in the loving bosom of women? This, however, is the primeval poetry without which there would be no poetry of words. Indeed, there is not and never has been for us humans any other object or source of activity and joy but that one poem of the godhead the earth, of which we, too, are part and flower.[9]

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[5] Friedrich Schlegel, "On Incomprehensibility," trans. Peter Firchow, in *Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde and The Fragments* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), p. 268. Cf. *Kritische-Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe* (Paderborn and Munich, 1967), ed. Hans Eichner, II, 126-46.

[6] Friedrich Schlegel, *Dialogue on Poetry and Literary Aphorisms*, trans. Ernst Behler and Roman Struc (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1968), p. 53.

[7] Friedrich Schlegel, "On the Limits of the Beautiful" (1794), trans. E. H. Millington, in *The Aesthetic and Miscellaneous Works of Friedrich von Schlegel* (London, 1849), p. 413n.

[8] P. 418.

[9] Schlegel, *Dialogue on Poetry*, pp. 53-54.

This "infinite and inexhaustible" world of poetry, this abundant chaos, is life itself.

Schlegel has thus redefined the essence of reality (the noumenon), not as Kant's unknowable BEING (a thing or substance in itself), but as a knowable, albeit illogical, BECOMING. Following Fichte, Schlegel argues that a "spiritual intuition" or direct consciousness of this chaotic becoming is possible, whether through the smile of a child or the loving bosom of women. Ultimately, Schlegel identifies this "intellectual" or "spiritual" intuition of the infinite with the aesthetic experience of "hovering" which alone is genuine freedom.

In defining essential reality or the noumenal realm as becoming, Schlegel relegates the principle of contradiction to the phenomenal realm. It thus becomes a useful category for dealing with the exigencies of daily life, and especially in matters relating to the corporeal world, but it has no *absolute* validity. Instead, Schlegel asserts that reality *is* contradiction or, more precisely, becoming. For becoming is a type of contradiction. In the process whereby A becomes not-A, there must be a period when it must be considered to be both A and not-A. Hence, A=not-A in-the-act-of-becoming. In this creative process, then, every thing is simultaneously itself and something other; all is simultaneously one and diverse. Schlegel thus rejects the Aristotelian thesis that substance (being) underlies all change (becoming) for the Heraclitian thesis that becoming underlies all substance. Schlegel can therefore unite the infinite and the finite "as a living becoming activity at the most only differentiated by degree; and the contradiction [between the infinite and the finite that Kant found unacceptable] is only an appearance that arises when one fixes and kills life by making it into a thing (substance)." [10] The finite-in-change is thus an analogue for, and way into, infinity, which the human mind can apprehend as an unceasing activity, as pure energy or a process-of-becoming underlying all being.

But the finite can never completely reveal the infinite because, if it did so, becoming would no longer be possible and life would cease. This is true both on the ontological and the epistemological levels. Schlegel equates the ontological process of constant becoming with the epistemological movement from unconsciousness to increasing consciousness. This cognitive process is stimulated, says Schlegel, by an emotional longing for an ever greater participation in the *Fülle*, a longing which ends only with death. "Never will the mind that knows the orgies of the true Muse journey on this road to the very end, nor will he presume to have reached it; for never will he be able to quench a longing which is eternally regenerated out of the abundance of gratifications." [11] And just as the individual consciousness can never be fully satisfied (for it can never attain an infinite self, even theoretically, without ending its own becoming), so every theoretical formulation of reality can never be infinite or complete, but only "an approximation" that must ultimately be transcended by being negated and rejected.[12] Therefore, Schegel concludes, "Scepticism is as eternal as philosophy [the creation of a specific system] . . . . The idea of philosophy is to be attained through an infinite progression of systems." [13] As he insists, "When the goal is reached, metaphysics should *begin again and again from the beginning*—alternating between chaos preparing for a system and then new chaos." [14] Schlegel's philosophical irony, an affirmation of universal becoming that denies the principle of contradiction, thus embraces both a creative and a de-creative activity: "It's equally fatal for the mind to have a system and to have none. It will simply have to decide to combine the two." [15]

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[10] *Friedrich Schlegels philosophische Vorlesungen aus den Jahren 1804 bis 1806*, ed C. J. H. Windischmann (Bonn, 1836, 1837), II, 19.

When Schlegel considered the artistic process within this philosophical context, he concluded that the work of art can and should imitate or represent this ontological becoming. The artistic ironist begins with the enthusiastic creation of a system or fiction, a fiction that he simultaneously subjects to ironic scrutiny and rejection. These acts of construction and deconstruction must take place at the same time, not—as Paul de Man would have it—sequentially. The fictional world must be both sincerely presented and sincerely undermined; the romantic ironist must constantly balance or "hover" between self-creation and self-destruction in that mental state Schlegel called *Selbstbeschränkung* or self-determination. Schlegel insisted that mimesis is possible. The work of art that moves back and forth between enthusiastic creation and sceptical de-creation accurately mirrors the fertile chaos of life itself. Such a romantic/ironic work, he proclaimed,

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[11] Schlegel, *Dialogue on Poetry*, p. 53.

[12] Friedrich Schlegel, *Transcendental-philosophie (1800-1801)*, in *Friedrich Schlegel: Neue philosophische Schriften*, ed. Josef Körner (Frankfurt, 1936), p. 124.

[13] Page 125.

[14] Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophische Lehrjahre*, in *Kritische-Ausgabe*, XVIII, p. 283, # 1048.

[15] Friedrich Schlegel, *Critical Fragments from The Athenaeum* (1798-1800), trans. Peter Firchow. in *Schlegel's Lucinde*, p. 167, # 51.

> . . . alone can become, like the epic, a mirror of the whole circumambient world, an image of the age. And it can also—more than any other form—hover at the midpoint between the portrayed and the portrayer, free of all real and ideal self-interest, on the wings of poetic reflection, and can raise that reflection again and again to a higher power, can multiply it in an endless succession of mirrors. . . . Romantic poetry is in the arts what wit is in philosophy, and what society and sociability, friendship and love are in life. Other kinds of poetry are finished and are now capable of being fully analyzed. The romantic kind of poetry is still in the state of becoming; that, in fact, is its real essence: that it should forever be becoming and never be perfected. It can be exhausted by no theory and only a divinatory criticism would dare try to characterize its ideal. It alone is infinite, just as it alone is free; and it recognizes as its first commandment that the will of the poet can tolerate no law above itself. The romantic knd of poetry is the only one that is more than a kind, that is, as it were, poetry itself: for in a certain sense all poetry is or should be romantic.[16]

To produce such romantic poetry, to sustain this incredibly difficult hovering or balancing between self-assertion and self-negation requires, as Schlegel freely acknowledged, both enormous energy and great mental agility.

The ironic hovering of the artist manifests itself in the work of art as what Schlegel called " transcendental buffoonery." The work of art must reveal the presence of an authorial consciousness that is simultaneously affirming and mocking its own creation:

> There are ancient and modern poems that are pervaded by the divine breath of irony throughout and informed by a truly transcendental buffoonery. Internally: the mood that surveys everything and raises infinitely above all limitations, even above its own art, virtue, or genius; externally, in its execution: the mimic style of an averagely gifted Italian *buffo*.[17]

By " transcendental " Schlegel refers to a poetry that hovers between the ideal and the real, between the chaos of becoming and the orders of being. But outwardly, the work of art should create the same impression as that created by the *buffo* or harlequin figure in commedia dell'arte plays, a dramatic character who both controls the plot and mocks the play. For instance, in Carlo Gozzi's *The Love of Three Oranges*, Arlecchino is an intriguer who manipulates the action, even interrupting it to speak directly to the audience and to comment wittily upon the plot and the other actors. He frequently mimics the gestures and parodies the language of the other characters. But even as he undermines the credibility of the play as a dramatic illusion, he enables the plot to go forward and engineers the play's denouement. He thus simultaneously creates and de-creates the play and does so with zest and wit.[18] Such transcendental buffoonery is what Schlegel had in mind when he described irony as a parabasis. In Greek Old Comedy, the parabasis was an interruption of the action, usually in the middle of the play, in which the author's spokesman addressed the audience directly, often speaking either of the author's personal circumstances or attacking the faults of various contemporary personages. Thus the ironic artist makes his audience aware of his presence behind and in the work of art, a presence which simultaneously creates and wittily mocks the work before them. In form as well as content, then, the ironic work of art must join together chaos and the orders men impose upon it. As Schlegel said, it should be an " artfully ordered confusion, [a]charming symmetry of contradictions, [a] wonderfully perennial alternation of enthusiasm and irony which lives even in the smallest parts of the whole." [19]

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[16] *Athenaeum*, # 116.

[17] Friedrich Schlegel, *Critical Fragments from The Lycaeum*, trans. Peter Firchow, in *Schlegel's Lucinde*, # 42.

For Schlegel, it must be stressed, an ironic consciousness of the limits of human knowledge and the necessity of death does not lead to despair, frustration or a lucid madness. Rather, it poses a challenge to the alert and enthusiastically creative mind: to participate ever more expansively in the never-exhaustible abundance of creative becoming. Life, and the ironic artistic process that actively participates in life, is play, insists Schlegel. " We demand that events, men, in short the play of life, be taken as play and be represented as such." [20]

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[18] Allardyce Nicoll comments that the German Romantics who referred affectionately to the commedia dell'arte almost certainly had Carlo Gozzi's fantastic comedies in mind (*The World of Harlequin: A Critical Study of the Commedia dell'Arte* [Cambridge: The University Press, 1963], p. 217).

[19] Schlegel, *Dialogue on Poetry*, p. 86.

[20] Page 89.

Romantic irony, in sum, is a mode of consciousness or way of thinking about the world that finds a corresponding literary mode. The artist who conceives the universe as an infinitely abundant chaos, who sees his own consciousness as simultaneously limited and yet involved in an on-going process of growth or becoming, who therefore enthusiastically engages in the difficult but exhilarating balancing between self-creation and self-destruction, and who then articulates this experience in a form which simultaneously creates and de-creates itself is producing that literary mode Schlegel called romantic irony.

For Schlegel, this movement back and forth between enthusiastic creation and sceptical de-creation mimics the abundant chaos and never-ending process of life. For Paul de Man, only one half of this dialectic is true: sceptical irony, that irony of irony that Schlegel cautions against (for "nothing is duller than the empty core of irony without enthusiasm"[21]), alone is authentic. Schlegel's concept of romantic irony as a mirroring of an ontological *Fülle* may be a mystification, but it is no less (and no more) ontologically "authentic" than Paul de Man's mystification of a nihilistic scepticism or "lucid madness." De Man privileges negation at the expense of creation—and thus arbitrarily confines post-Enlightment allegoric figuration to a temporal process of de-mystification, even though the greatest literary allegorics have prefigured a union of the self with an other, whether nature or God. Meyer Abrams, who omits Romantic irony—and its greatest literary exponent, Byron—from his discussion of the nature of Romanticism in *Natural Supernaturalism*, privileges mythopoeic creation at the expense of ironic scepticism. Schlegel's concept of Romantic irony at least has the advantage of including both the creative and the de-creative process—and therefore deserves more serious and sympathetic attention that it has yet received from Anglo-American criticism.[22]

[21] Friedrich Schlegel, *Literary Notebooks 1797-1801*, ed. Hans Eichner (London: Athlone Press, 1957), # 1047.

[22] In a forthcoming study, *English Romantic Irony*, I will discuss Schlegel's concept of romantic irony in relation to literary works by Byron, Keats, Carlyle, Coleridge and Carroll, among others. Readers might also consult Peter Conrad's *Shandyism: The Character of Romantic Irony* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1978) and an essay originally written for my graduate seminar on romantic irony at Stanford University, Janice L. Haney's "'Shadow-Hunting': Romantic Irony, *Sartor Resartus*, and Victorian Romanticism," *Studies in Romanticism*, 17 (1978), 307-33.

SUZANNE FERGUSON[*]

The Face in the Mirror: Authorial Presence in the Multiple Vision of Third-Person Impressionist Narrative

> Impressionism exists to render those queer effects of real life that are like so many views seen through bright glass—through glass so bright that whilst you perceive through it a landscape or a back-yard, you are aware that, on its surface, it reflects a face of a person behind you.
>
> Ford Madox Ford, " Impressionism and Fiction "

Although impressionism in fiction comprises a collection of themes and particular strategies of description, characterization, structure, and symbolization, the strategy most often seen as essential to impressionism is the banishing of the author, so that all the fictional experience shall seem to emanate from the consciousness of a character or characters in the work. From *Madame Bovary* through *The Ambassadors*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and the impressionist works of Conrad, Ford, and Crane, we find an explicit aim of impressionist authors in the French and English traditions was to submerge or efface authorial presence from the surface of the work. The author might remain " in his work like God in creation, invisible and all-powerful "; but he ought not directly express his opinions in it: quoting Flaubert again, " no lyricism, no comments, the author's personality absent."[1]

The notion that the reader should confront the fictional experience as he confronts life, with no absolute values imposed by the creator of the work speaking from within it, is a direct consequence of the impressionist's epistemological assumption that reality is subjective and relative, not objective and absolute. Thus authorial authority is out of place; as the characters struggle toward knowledge and value the reader grapples with their problems vicariously. " The object of the

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[1] Gustave Flaubert, *Correspondance*, 11 *Oeuvres Complètes de Gustave Flaubert* (Paris: Club de l'Honnête homme, 1974), 13, pp. 567, 164.

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novelist," says Ford, "is to keep the reader entirely oblivious to the fact that the author exists—even of the fact that he is reading a book."[2]

An obvious way to suppress the author is to make a character narrate in the first person, but though most of the impressionist writers produced successful first-person works, a number of the finest, most characteristic impressionist fictions have third-person narration, a method which, in several of the authors' explicit theories and in critics' analyses, allows the reader to see into the characters' consciousnesses and at the same time to see beyond them, without direct authorial intervention. This seeing beyond, described opaquely by James in his discussions of the central intelligence and more openly by Lubbock in the *Craft of Fiction* (1921) and Beach in in *The Method of Henry James* (1918), complicates matters somewhat, but it has generally been accepted by later critics.[3] How the author manages to be absent yet present in the narrative and why this should be desirable are questions that take us to the center of the debate over defining literary impressionism.

The disappearance of the author has been such an article of faith for impressionist theory that several generations of readers and teachers have gone about analysis of a number of third-person impressionist works just as if the author had in fact withdrawn, when actually his presence is quite palpable and might even be seen to give impressionist works one of their characteristic qualities, i.e., that of a "multiple vision": simultaneous perspectives which show us that "nothing [is] simply one thing,"[4] but that perspective and mode determine our conception of reality in the sensible world.

If I may illustrate by analogy with impressionist painting: in Monet's haystacks we see first the painting as painting. A canvas is covered with color, a composition. Most viewers immediately identify "in" the painting a haystack: a haystack at dawn, in full day, in twilight, in a mist . . . . Our knowledge of haystacks in nature allows us to make the identification and arouses whatever associations we may have with haystacks (or water lilies, cathedrals, what-not); but we do not go on from there to judge the painting as a "representation" of a haystack. Assuming that there was a real haystack, we nonetheless sense something coming between us and that hypothetical haystack. It is Monet's presence, expressed in his technique, his peculiar vision. We have never seen in reality a haystack like this—at least, not until after we have seen Monet's. His signature is very likely painted into the painting, unnecessary to the composition, something apart from the representation of the subject, something almost invisible: but not quite. Just so, in classic third-person impressionist works, the authors remain visible, both in their style and, often, in the signature of their unabashed intrusion. They are omnipresent as the creators of a special, multi-leveled vision of reality, in which we see the characters' interpretations juxtaposed, with various degrees of frequency and markedness, to the authors' own.[5]

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[2] Ford Madox Ford, *The Critical Writings of Ford Madox Ford*, ed. Frank MacShane (Lincoln, Neb.: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1964), p. 76.

[3] Percy Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1921); Joseph Warren Beach, *The Method of Henry James* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1918); Allen Tate and Caroline Gordon, eds., *The House of Fiction* (New York: Scribners, 1950); Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, eds., *Understanding Fiction* (New York: F. S. Crofts, 1943); however, Norman Friedman, in "Point of View in Fiction: The Development of a Critical Concept," *PMLA*, 70 (1955), 1160-84, ignores this aspect of what he calls "selective omniscience."

[4] Virginia Woolf, *To The Lighthouse* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1955), p. 277. Further references appear in the text abbreviated as *TTL*.

At this point it will be apparent that I do not distinguish, in any but the most abstractly theoretical way, the "authors" of third-person impressionist fictions from their narrators. Inasmuch as fictional discourse is not ever "about" reality in the same way as factual discourse is—though the former may portray historical figures and actions—it cannot formally contain its author as narrator.[6] Nevertheless, in their critical writings real authors habitually speak of the narrators of their novels as the "authors," that is, themselves. We need not go to Fielding, Thackeray, or Trollope for our examples, but only to Flaubert, James, and Ford. The last of these, especially, the most articulate and insistent advocate of fictional impressionism, continually engages the question of authorial (not narratorial) presence and absence in his criticism. Although he often warns against the admission of the author into the text, he admits that if the sacrosanct "rendering" should begin to interfere with narrative progress, one must "just boldly and remorselessly . . . relate and *risk* the introduction of [him]self as author." [7]

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[5] Theory of impressionist painting, curiously, also suggests the "disappearance" of the painter in a "scientific" representation of how things look in particular lights. But with the exception of a very few works, the paintings can readily be ascribed to their painters by the choice of subjects and the techniques of painting. Here if anywhere one may grasp the truth of Flaubert's assertion that "style is an absolute way of seeing things." Compare Ford, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

[6] See Käte Hamburger, *The Logic of Literature*, tr. Marilynn Rose (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 134-75.

To insist upon the rigid separation of author and reliable narrator must involve some such scheme as Seymour Chatman's continuum between author and reader that runs from real author through implied author, narrator, narratee, implied reader, and real reader, with the real author and reader always outside the boundaries of the text.[8] Such pedantic application of structuralist principle can only interfere with analysis rather than expediting it, while to jettison this cumbersome formalism might also allow us to deal more sensibly with another critical bugaboo, the so-called omniscient narrator.

Because narrators rarely if ever exercise "total" omniscience in revealing and commenting upon the consciousnesses of all characters or on the significance of all actions in a fiction, we are obliged to refer to them as "limited" omniscient narrators, in an oxymoron both logically invalid and critically unworkable. That the critic should handicap himself with such a taxonomy, when the authors, from the eighteenth century onward, have so little compunction about conceiving and writing of themselves as narrators of their fictions, is one of the strange anomalies of modern hermeneutics. If, in fact, the reliable narrators of Fielding, Thackeray, Dickens, Eliot, James, Flaubert, and Woolf were distinct from the authors, we should expect the narrators' styles to differ conspicuously in syntax, lexis, and morphology from those of their authors' letters and non-fiction; and we should expect them to evince attitudes and ideas distinguishable from the author's. Neither of these stipulations having been demonstrated, it is reasonable to identify the narrator as the "implied author," or simply as the "author," with the tacit understanding that he is a fictional persona, not a real person, a critical task easy for most readers. Such narrators speak the author's direct communications with the reader, and mediate between the characters, the actions, and the settings of the narrative (its structuralist "functions") and the reader. Their authority is generally regarded as going "beyond" that of the characters, even though it is in some sense limited to what J. Hillis Miller has happily defined as a "general consciousness or social mind which rises into existence out of the collective mental experience of the individual human beings in the story."[9]

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[7] *The Critical Writings*, pp. 74-75.

[8] Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 151, 267.

In this paper I will deal with two aspects of authorial presence in third-person impressionist narrative: over-intervention and indirect reporting of speech and thought in the free indirect style. The latter, which has evoked a good deal of controversy in linguistic and literary circles (primarily as to whether it is or is not "narrated"), has also been discussed under the appellations "narrated monologue" and "narrated interior monologue" (Dorrit Cohn), "represented speech" (Otto Jespersen, Ann Banfield), "substitutionary speech" (Bernard Fehr, Paul Hernadi), "le style indirect libre" (Marguerite Lips, Stephen Ullmann and others), and "erlebte Rede" (Étienne Lorck, Oscar Walzel, Leo Spitzer, et al.).[10] In analyzing several impressionist texts, I will suggest how authorial presence, this particular kind of presence, creates characteristic impressionist effects of ambiguity and irony and should be thought of as typically impressionist narration.

The question of the existence of overt authorial presence need not be labored. For examples, I turn to the two works which establish the classic impressionist techniques and vision in third-person narration, *Madame Bovary* and *The Ambassadors*. Both Flaubert and James insisted—apparently without any sense that they were mistaken—that they had eliminated their own presence from these works. "The reason I get on so slowly is that nothing in the book is drawn from myself," wrote Flaubert to Louise Colet; "Strether's sense of these things, and Strether's only, should avail me for showing them; I should know them but through his more or less groping knowledge of them, since his very gropings would figure among his most interesting motions," wrote James in the Preface to the work he thought his most successfully achieved.[11] Yet critics of both works have documented instances of authorial intrusion so numerous as to constitute a sense of almost continuous presence.

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[9] J. Hillis Miller, "Virginia Woolf's All Souls' Day: The Omniscient Narrator in *Mrs. Dalloway*," in *The Shaken Realist: Essays in Modern Literature in Honor of Frederick J. Hoffman*, ed. Melvin J. Friedman and John B. Vickery (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1970), p. 105.

[10] Dorrit Cohn, "Narrated Monologue: Definition of a Fictional Style," *Comparative Literature*, 18 (1966), 97-112, and *Transparent Minds* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978); Otto Jespersen, *The Philosophy of Grammar* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1924); Ann Banfield, "Where Epistemology, Style, and Grammar Meet Literary History: The Development of Represented Speech and Thought," *New Literary History*, 9 (1978), 415-54; Bernard Fehr, *Von England's geistigen Beständen* (Frauenfeld: Huber, 1944), pp. 264 ff.; Paul Hernadi, "Dual Perspective: Free Indirect Discourse and Related Techniques," *Comparative Literature*, 24 (1972), 32-43. Marguerite Lips, *Le Style Indirect Libre* (Paris: Payot, 1926); Stephen Ullmann, "Reported Speech and Internal Monologue in Flaubert," *Style in the French Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1957), pp. 95-120; Jean Étienne Lorck, *Die "Erlebte Rede": eine sprachliche Untersuchung* (Heidelburg: Carl Winter, 1921); Oscar Walzel, ("Von 'erlebter Rede,'" *Das Wortkunstwerk* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1926); Leo Spitzer, *Stilstudien* (Munich: M. Hueber, 1922).

In his book on free indirect style, *The Dual Voice*, Roy Pascal treats in some detail the introduction of authorial commentary into *Madame Bovary* in conjunction with free indirect reporting of speech and thought.[12] Actually, Flaubert uses the authorial narrator freely throughout the novel in descriptions of people and scenes, sometimes to share special knowledge from outside the work with the reader:

> Elle déclarait adorer les enfants; c'était sa consolation, sa joie, sa folie, et elle accompagnait ses caresses d'expansions lyriques, qui, à d'autres qu'à des Yonvillais, eussent rappelé la Sachette de *Notre Dame de Paris.*
>
> (She claimed to love children; they were her consolation, her joy, her passion, and she accompanied her caresses with lyrical outbursts that would have reminded any one but the Yonvillians of Sachette in *Notre Dame de Paris.*)[13]

The sentence begins in free indirect style, mimicking Emma's (probably) unconsciously insincere expressions of love for her little girl, generalized for emphasis to *les enfants*, but it shifts in the subordinate clause to obvious authorial commentary. If there were any chance of our being taken in by Emma in the first instance, it is completely undercut in the second. The irony implicit in her words is made explicit in Flaubert's.

But irony is not the only function of the authorial intrusions. Sometimes the blending of authorial language with characters' perceptions is so fluid that a genuine and irresolvable ambiguity is created.

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[11] See Gustave Flaubert, *Correspondance*, II, 322; Henry James, *The Ambassadors*, I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909; rpt., 1937), p. xv.

[12] Roy Pascal, *The Dual Voice* (Manchester: Univ. of Manchester Press, 1977), pp. 98-112.

[13] Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, ed. Maurice Nadeau (Lausanne: Société Coopérative Éditions Rencontre, 1965), p. 149. Further references appear in the text as *MB*. The English versions are from Paul de Man's revision of Eleanor Marx Aveling's translation in the Norton Critical Edition of *Madame Bovary* (New York: Norton, 1965).

> Emma maigrit, ses joues pâlirent, sa figure s'allongea. Avec ses bandeaux noirs, ses grands yeux, son nez droit, sa démarche d'oiseau, et toujours silencieuse maintenant, ne semblait-elle pas traverser l'existence en y touchant à peine, et porter au front la vague empreinte de quelque prédestination sublime? Elle était si triste et si calme, si douce à la fois et si réservée, que l'on frissonne dans les églises sous le parfum des fleurs mêlé au froid des marbres. Les autres même n'échappaient point à cette séduction. Le pharmacien disait:—C'est une femme de grands moyens et qui ne serait pas déplacée dans une sous-préfecture. (*MB*, 149-50)
>
> (Emma grew thinner, her cheeks paler, her face longer. With her black hair, her large eyes, her straight nose, her birdlike walk, and always silent now, did she not seem to be passing through life scarcely touching it, bearing on her brow the slight mark of a sublime destiny? She was so sad and so calm, at once so gentle and so reserved, that near her one came under the spell of an icy charm, as we shudder in churches at the perfume of the flowers mingling with the cold of the marble. Even others could not fail to be impressed. The pharmacist said:
>
> "She is a real lady! She would not be out of place in a sous-préfecture!")

Does Emma think of her walk as birdlike? Does she articulate the notion of a "vague imprint of a sublime destiny?" Could she invent (or remember from novels) the simile of the cold marble? Surely these are authorial formulations, although they express the coloration of Emma's sense of herself. How aware is she of the effect she makes on others? The word *même* suggests that the author deliberately exaggerates the distinctions of Emma's appearance, of which she is so intensely conscious and which she wishes—successfully—to impress upon others, *even* such a one as Homais.

In the paragraph immediately preceding that just quoted, it is Charles who finds Emma transcendent, "une apotheose qui s'envole," but that paragraph, too, lapses into authorial comment, this time a generalization:

> C'était un de ces sentiments purs qui n'embarrassent pas l'exercise de la vie, que l'on cultive parce qu'ils sont rares, et dont la perte affligerait plus qu la possession n'est réjouissante. (*MB*, 149)
>
> (It was one of those pure feelings that do not interfere with life, that are cultivated for their rarity, and whose loss would afflict more than their fulfillment rejoices.)

The tendency to aphorism which appears in authorial generalization is echoed in the decidedly " arty " rhetoric of Emma's own perception of her situation, as when, in the justly famous scene after her first adultery she identifies herself with " la légion lyrique des ces femmes adultères " who would sing in her memory " avec de voix de souers qui la charmaient "; or in summary statements, as when she " savors " her revenge (on life? on society? on Charles?) for what she sees as her " suffering " (from the denial of love in marriage, or consummation with the young Léon?) " sans remords, sans inquiétude, sans trouble " (*MB*, 210).

Passages of authorial speech, or authorial formulation of a character's speech or thought—as distinct from direct representation of character's speech and thought—appear throughout the novel: yet in a large sense, Flaubert's notion that he had given " psychological analysis the swiftness, clarity, and impetus of a strictly dramatic narrative "[14] is true to our experience of the book. For one thing, there is proportionally less authorial comment than in, say, *Le Rouge et le Noir* or *Le Père Goriot*, and more direct treatment of the characters' views of the situations and themselves; and the commentary remains less tendentious. Nevertheless, one is not abandoned to Emma's or the other characters' estimates of the situation for any substantial length of time. The author is present not only in panoramic views but in scenes, in phrases (" you may be sure," " as it were "), in an allusion or figure (" Sachette," " the perfume of the flowers mingling with the cold of marble "), in a rhetorical scheme (" the lyric legion," " without remorse, without anxiety, without concern "), and in the ambiguity of voice resulting from the intermingling of authorial voice with free indirect representation of speech and thought.

In *The Ambassadors*, too, authorial presence has been recognized by a number of critics, including Wayne Booth, Ian Watt, and Franz Stanzel.[15] In " James, the Old Intruder " (1958), John Tilford subjected this aspect of the novel to close scrutiny, revealing among other " violations," sixty-five references to Strether as " our friend," and noting their significance: " familiar in nineteenth-century fiction

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[14] See *Correspondence*, II, 223.

[15] Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 59, 173; Ian Watt, " The First Paragraph of *The Ambassadors*: An Explication," in *The Ambassadors: Text, Sources and Criticism*, ed. S. P. Rosenbaum (New York: Norton, 1964), pp. 474-75; Franz Stanzel, *Narrative Situations in the Novel*, tr. James P. Pusack (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 99-102.

[the term] inevitably implies an amiable understanding between the candid narrator and his gentle reader."[16] Variations of the epithet—"poor Strether," "poor man," "our hero"—are also catalogued, as in the narrator's referring to himself in the first-person singular, in phrases that look backward and forward in the time of the narrative, and in statements which point to the authorial activity of writing: "If we should go into all that occupied our friend . . . we should have to mend our pen." It would be pointless to further belabor the issue, though the interested reader should consult Tilford for the full range of James's "offenses" against the purity of Strether's perspective. I should like to consider one episode, however, for the implications it has about James's use of the intrusions.

While the narrator has been unusually reticent in the chapters leading up to the crucial discovery by Strether of Chad and Marie in their rowboat, in that scene his presence is strongly asserted. There are in fact more than a dozen direct interventions of the omniscient author in the ten pages that make up Chapter Four of Book Eleven in the New York Edition,[17] as well as several ambiguous intrusions, including instances of free indirect speech, unusual in *The Ambassadors* as a whole, although free indirect style is often used in the representation of thought. The direct speeches of the narrator range from a simple "Our friend went down to the water . . ." to fairly elaborate analysis:

> Why indeed—apart from oddity—the situation should have been really stiff was a question naturally not practical at the moment, and in fact, so far as we are concerned, a question tackled, later on and in private, only by Strether himself. He was to reflect later on and in private that it was mainly *he* who had explained . . . . (*A*, II, 259)
>
> Strether was to remember afterwards further that this had had for him the effect of forming Chad's almost sole intervention; and indeed he was to remember further still, in subsequent mediation, many things that, as it were, fitted together. (*A*, II, 260)
>
> Then it was that his impression took fuller form—the impression, destined only to deepen, to complete itself, that they had something to put a face upon . . . . Yet his theory, as we know, had

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[16] John E. Tilford, "James, the Old Intruder," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 4 (1958), 158.

[17] *The Ambassadors*, II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909; rpt., 1937), pp. 256-66. Further references appear in the text as A, II.

> bountifully been that the facts were specifically none of his business, and were, over and above, so far as one had to do with them, intrinsically beautiful . . . and since we have spoken of what he was, after his return, to recall and interpret, it may as well immediately be said that his real experience of the few hours put on, in that belated vision . . . the aspect that is most to our purpose. (*A*, II, 261-62)

It cannot be stressed too strongly that the only apparent function of these intrusions is to provide authorial presence, to insist on it, to displace Strether from his position as the sole lucid reflector of his experience. The direct appeals to the reader—at least four—to what Strether was to think of the scene " after," are reminders of what has already been said, all come between us and Strether's mind, all give us the split perspective so intrinsic to this and other impressionist novels. In this scene, if anywhere, we might expect a strong focus upon the characters in significant action, perhaps the most significant action to occur anywhere in the novel; or at least a focus upon Strether's immediate response to the action, in a rendering of the illusion of life uncluttered by the overt presence of an author—who insists upon dragging in the *reader!*—brooding over what Strether was to think later of his adventure. But James refuses to allow our immersion in the action or in Strether's consciousness. We must see not only what happened and how it affected Strether at the time, but that it was a happening so traumatic that certain points in it would recur to him as subjects for analysis on numerous subsequent occasions.

Moreover, the authorial interventions and related speculations of Strether " after " the fact effectually stand in place of actual representation of the scene. Although we are told that a lively, even frenetic conversation took place among the friends, only a single sentence of direct speech is presented: " Comme cela se trouve!" A significant amount of free indirect speech *is* reported, however, so complicated grammatically that one at times cannot distinguish what might have been said and who might have said it, from what was *thought* by Strether.

For example, the hostess' announcement that Strether might count on his carriage to the station,

> settled the matter for his friends as well; the conveyance—it *was* all too lucky!—would serve for them; and nothing was more delightful than his being in a position to make the train so definite. It might have been, for themselves—to hear Madame de Vionnet

> —almost unnaturally vague, a detail left to be fixed . . . . (*A*, II, 260)

The ambiguity of origin of speeches represented in this way functions to emphasize the deliberate confusion being mutually created by the participants to mask the discomfiture—the horror—they so acutely feel, and to stress the need for Strether's subsequent reflection upon the scene in order to understand its full import. When he does reflect, we cannot determine if the figure for his embarrassment embodies his self-perception or the author's view of him: " he almost blushed, in the dark, for the way he had dressed the possibility in vagueness, as a little girl might have dressed her doll " (*A*, II, 266).

As the foregoing analyses suggest, it is virtually impossible to assess the significance of authorial presence in impressionist narrative without also taking into account the effect of the free indirect style. Presentation of speech and of unspoken verbalization of thought and sensation are among the most important features of the realization of fictional characters, who are dramatized, so to speak, independently of a narrative context only in what they say or are portrayed as experiencing "internally." Norman Page, in *Speech in the English Novel*, distinguishes seven different ways of representing a character's talk;[18] presentation of mental experience occurs in parallel grammatical forms. In general, however, we recognize three primary methods: direct, indirect, and free indirect. Until recently, the classic exposition of the three modes was Marguerite Lips's *Le Style Indirect Libre* (1926)[19] although the first person to write about indirect free style was the linguist Charles Bally in 1912. In Lips's time, controversy was already flourishing about the grammatical features of the form and about its origins and uses in literature. In the late fifties and sixties it became associated with the discussion of point of view in fiction, and the basic problem of whether the form is in fact narrated, as indirect speech is, or not, like direct speech, makes it pertinent to my topic.

In a series of articles, Ann Banfield has argued that its third-person pronouns for speaker reference and its past tense (imperfect and conditional in French) are grammatical markers which do not materially affect the representational aspect of the speech. The words shown are to be thought of—with the exceptions noted—as the "exact" words of the speaker, and they maintain expressive markers and dialect features except, Banfield says, phonology (but the latter *is* represented frequently in Dickens, in Ford's *The Last Post*, and doubtless elsewhere). Thus, she maintains, the words should be regarded as a represented, direct form rather than a narrated, indirect form. In her most recent writing on the subject she has abandoned the term indirect free style for Jespersen's "represented speech."[20]

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[18] Norman Page, *Speech in the English Novel* (London: Longman, 1973), p. 35.

[19] Roy Pascal's 1977 study, *The Dual Voice: Free Indirect Speech and its Functioning in the Nineteenth Century Novel*, displaces Lips. While I disagree with some of Pascal's conclusions about "misuse" of the style, I find that his examples and analysis make obsolete most of the earlier studies, including Banfield's 1973 and 1978 articles referred to here.

Although her general argument is overwhelmingly refuted by the examples and analysis given in Pascal's *The Dual Voice*, one point in her 1973 essay is relevant to the present discussion. Using a famous example of free indirect style from *Emma* earlier cited by Graham Hough in *Style and Stylistics*, Banfield points out that its use signifies Emma's hearing of what Mr. Elton said to her:

> . . . scarcely had they passed the sweep-gate and joined the other carriage, than she found her subject cut up—her hand seized, her attention demanded, and Mr. Elton actually making violent love to her: availing himself of the precious opportunity, declaring sentiments which must be already well known, hoping—fearing—adoring—ready to die if she refused him; but flattering himself that his ardent attachment and unequalled love and unexampled passion could not fail of having some effect, and in short, very much resolved on being seriously accepted as soon as possible.[21]

"These lines do echo Mr. Elton's words," Banfield writes, "but they are not transposed from direct speech into this style. We hear, instead, the echo of his words in Emma's consciousness, as the verb *found* suggests."[22]

Indeed, this particular use of the style conforms to impressionist theory in that the perceiver within the work becomes a part of the represented experience for the reader outside it, while the integrity of the speech as uttered by the speaker is presumably maintained. Banfield continues, "when a dialogue is presented in the free indirect style, it is not understood as actual *spoken* words, but as words *heard* or perceived, registering on some consciousness. Descriptions in this style present scenes viewed from the limited perspective of one character."[23] While we may grant that there is usually someone listening when a character "talks" in a novel, it is not always just the "limited perspective of one character" which conveys the speech to the reader. A handy example is the passage from *Madame Bovary* quoted above: "Elle déclarait adorer les enfants; c'était sa consolation, sa joie, sa folie...." We have no doubt that Emma in fact used these words (or would have, had she been real). Nevertheless, as the ensuing clauses indicate, they are not reported in the free indirect style so that we may judge what her neighbors thought of them, but that we readers may recognize her insincerity, transparent through the third-person pronouns and the verb forms. Stephen Ullmann and Dorrit Cohn have recognized the faculty of creating irony in the indirect free reporting of speech,[24] which the above illustrates so well. How is irony evident? In the distance between Emma's reported utterance and our reader-perception of her character, a distance fixed by the pronouns and verbs, which imply an intervening consciousness between her verbalization and our reception, there is a consciousness that can belong to none other than the authorial narrator who reports the rest of the scene.

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[20] Ann Banfield, "Narrative Style and Direct and Indirect Speech," *Foundations of Language*, 10 (1973), 32; and "Where Epistemology, Style, and Grammar Meet . . . ," pp. 416-22.

[21] Jane Austen, *Emma* (Boston: Riverside Press, 1957), p. 100.

[22] Banfield, "Narrative Style . . . ," p. 31.

Far from being clearly un-narrated, the form suggests, in many cases, the presence of a narrator where none might be otherwise apparent. Dorrit Cohn's terms, "narrated monologue" and "narrated interior monologue," indicate this sense. While free indirect reporting of speech and thought cannot be claimed as the exclusive property of impressionist narrative—Pascal shows that one of its most ardent devotées is Trollope—its use in conjunction with the guarded, ambiguous intrusions of the authorial narrator consistently functions to create the kind of multiple perspective I have found intrinsic to the impressionist way of conceiving "fictional" reality. What it indicates is not a self-consciousness of the speaker or listener, but an "other" consciousness, through which we both hear the words and judge them, distanced in space and time from the speaker. This is true even when the forms appear without palpable authorial intrusion, in the presentation of *thought*, as often in Joyce:

> Where was his boyhood now? Where was the soul that had hung back from her destiny, to brood alone upon the shame of her

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[23] *Ibid.*

[24] Ullmann, pp. 109, 110, 117; Cohn, "Narrated Monologue...," p. 111.

> wounds and in her house of squalor and subterfuge to queen it in faded cerements and in wreaths that withered at the touch? Or where was he?
>
> He was alone. He was unheeded, happy and near to the wild heart of life. He was alone and young and willful and wildhearted, alone amid a waste of wild air and brackish waters and the sea-harvest of shells and tangle and veiled grey sunlight and gayclad lightclad figures, of children and girls and voices childish and girlish in the air.[25]

Or in Flaubert:

> Elle allait donc posséder enfin ces joies de l'amour, cette fièvre du bonheur dont elle avait désespéré. Elle entrait dans quelque chose de merveilleux où tout serait passion, extase, délire; un immensité bleuâtre l'entourait . . . . (*MB*, 209)
>
> (So at last she was to know those joys of love, that fever of happiness of which she had despaired! She was entering upon a marvelous world where all would be passion, ecstasy, delerium. She felt herself surrounded by an endless rapture . . . .)

Even in instances such as these, where only the author's style remains to keep his presence before us, we may hardly determine whether it is in fact the character or the author "speaking." As Ullmann has observed, "The author's intrusion may become so marked that the free indirect form will be no more than a façade." [26]

Although one might presume that in this blending of authorial and characters' voices a sympathy or identification of viewpoint would be established, as we have already noticed, the more frequent effect is irony. We suspect that Stephen Dedalus is not at the "wild heart" of life—whatever that may be; we are quite certain that Emma will not "possess at least the joys of love... endless rapture." Both the ambiguity and the irony are hallmarks of impressionist effect, and both are amply present in virtually all examples of indirect free style from Fanny Burney and La Fontaine forward. It is in the union of subject and form of mature impressionist narrative that these qualities of the free indirect style are most fully exploited.

Both authorial narration and free indirect style are highly visible in the fiction of Virginia Woolf, though the latter is relatively infrequent in the works leading up to *Mrs. Dalloway*. J. Hillis Miller has discussed at some length the implications of authorial presence in that novel, likening its narrator to "the omniscient narrators of *Vanity Fair*, *Middlemarch*, or *The Last Chronicle of Barset*"; in *Mrs. Dalloway* as in the novels of Woolf's Victorian predecessors, Miller writes, "nothing exists for the narrator which does not first exist in the mind of one of the characters."[27] This is provocative, and true in the sense that it ought to be in any fiction that is reasonably coherent—with the possible exception of highly allusive narrations such as Fielding's, in which the author sides with the audience against some characters by ridiculing them.

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[25] James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Viking Press, 1968), p. 171.

[26] Ullmann, p. 112; See also Pascal, pp. 85-97.

The notion that the supposed "omniscience" of these narrators is limited to a "general consciousness" represented by the characters is intriguing because the authorial voices portrayed in impressionist fiction are, frequently openly, limited in their own authority.[28] That is, they must resort to speculation rather than definite assertion. Thus, "Mrs. Ramsay . . . seemed to raise herself with an effort, and at once to pour erect into the air a rain of energy" (*TTL*, 58); "When in a quarter of an hour he came down, what his hostess saw, what she might have taken in . . ." (*A*, I, 7-8); "ne semblait-elle pas traverser l'existence en y touchant à peine, et porter au front la vague empreinte de quelque prédestination sublime? " (*MB*, 149). Their omniscience is selective, sporadic; they are frequently unable to tell us the absolute "truth" of their characters' experience. This limitation appears in other nineteenth-century fiction as well, notably in Hawthorne, Melville, and Hardy, and should probably be considered an impressionist technique even though a number of the works in which it appears are only marginally impressionistic. It is quite different from such self-regarding admissions of the fictionality of the narrative as Trollope's "Whether the toil rested partly with her, or wholly with her handmaid, it is not for such a one as the author even to imagine."[29] The distinction is an important one, and it in effect removes the narrators of *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To The Lighthouse*, *Madame Bovary* and *The Ambassadors*, *Parade's End* and "The Dead" from the same category as those of *Vanity Fair*, *Middlemarch*, and *Barchester Towers*. The authorial voices of the realistic tradition in the novel, whether self-reflexive (Thackeray and Trollope) or not (George Eliot), in effect have the kind of authority, the knowledge of their characters' motives and sensations, that impressionist authors eschew, precisely because uncertainty and ambiguity, multiplicity and mystery are integral to impressionist epistemology. The world is composed of "seemings," and things or people that "might [be] seen," and sometimes are, "with a vision kindly adjusted." The authorial narrator is reliable only insofar as the "truth" may be defined, and he reminds us of this limitation in his rhetoric. The reluctance of impressionist authorial narrators to take definite positions in interpreting and evaluating their characters' experience gives rise to quarrels among readers about interpretations, often pointless, since indeterminacy of meaning is intentional for these authors.

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[27] Miller, p. 105.

[28] Compare Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis*, tr. Willard Trask (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1953), pp. 531-32.

[29] *Barchester Towers*, quoted in Chatman, p. 249.

Woolf's most popular novel, *To the Lighthouse*, is also her most controversial.[30] Critics disagree about such apparently central issues as whether Mrs. Ramsay is nurturing or stifling, whether Mr. Ramsay is rational or irrational, whether their marriage is ideal or horrid; about the symbolism of the lighthouse, of the family house, of the sea and nature generally, of Lily's picture (or pictures, as the case may be); even about the book's narrative method. For Melvin Friedman *To The Lighthouse* is an example of the stream-of-consciousness novel; but for Ruth Temple, "Woolf never uses stream of consciousness."[31] It has been argued that the book lacks plot; and one of my students recently tried to argue that it had no characters, following James Naremore's assertion that "the whole book is the product of one voice which at times assumes the role of a given character and approximates his patterns of thought."[32]

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[30] See Ruth Z. Temple, "Never Say 'I,'" in *Virginia Woolf: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Claire Sprague (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1971), pp. 92-93.

[31] Melvin Friedman, *Stream of Consciousness: A Study in Literary Method* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1955), pp. 198-203; Temple, p. 98. The problem is one of terminology. Temple uses the term "stream of consciousness" apparently to refer to direct interior monologue, which rarely appears in *To The Lighthouse*; strictly speaking, an author does not "use" stream of consciousness, he "represents" it, by a number of techniques of which direct interior monologue is one. Virginia Woolf tends to favor indirect representation. But for a more subtly developed argument, see James Naremore, *The World Without a Self: Virginia Woolf and the Novel* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 60-76.

[32] Naremore, p. 123.

While I will not resolve any of the quarrels, partly because the book's radical ambiguity is its ultimate truth, I suggest that one source of the disagreement lies in Woolf's impressionist use of authorial narration. Because Chapter VI of "The Window," which gives the reader access to Mr. Ramsay's consciousness for the first time, has so frequently been the locus of dispute among my students and has been analyzed in some detail by Naremore, I should like to use it for a text here. In the second half of the chapter, Mr. Ramsay's and the authorial voices blend so intimately that although the passage undoubtedly traces Mr. Ramsay's train of thought, sometimes in his "quoted" words, it is more often than not impossible, except by arbitrary choice, to separate his thoughts and opinions from the author's.[33] Mr. Ramsay is said to be a philosopher whose "splendid mind" is grappling with a problem of epistemology: "subject and object and the nature of reality," according to his son. In the present passage his topic is symbolized by the alphabet.

> It was a splendid mind. For if thought is like the keyboard of a piano, divided into so many notes, or like the alphabet is ranged in twenty-six letters all in order, then his splendid mind had no sort of difficulty in running over those letters one by one, firmly and accurately, until it had reached, say, the letter Q. He reached Q. Very few people in the whole of England ever reach Q. (*TTL*, 53)

This appears to be description by the narrator, a nonspecialist in philosophy. But a little farther on it becomes increasingly evident that we are to take the alphabet analogy to be as well the literal content of Mr. Ramsay's own meditation:

> But after Q? What comes next? After Q there are a number of letters the last of which is scarcely visible to mortal eyes, but glimmers red in the distance. Z is only reached once by one man in a generation. Still, if he could reach R it would be some-

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[33] The impossibility of attributing certain speeches to a particular speaker makes the kind of analysis Mitchell Leaska attempts in *Virginia Woolf's Lighthouse: A Study in Critical Method* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1970) problematic. Because different readers will disagree about the attribution of a number of the speeches Leaska uses in his quantitative analysis, general acceptance of his conclusions is not possible. Even Cohn's distinctions among "psycho-narration," "quoted monologue," and "narrated monologue" (*Transparent Minds*, p. 14) cannot help when the speeches so successfully resist definitive assignment to either the author or the character.

> thing. Here at least was Q. He dug his heels in at Q. Q he was sure of. Q he could demonstrate. If Q then is Q—R—Here he knocked his pipe out, with two or three resonant taps on the handle of the urn, and proceeded. "Then R . . ." He braced himself. He clenched himself. (*TTL*, 53-54)

From this point a new set of analogies develops, narrated but apparently Mr. Ramsay's own, since they appear in the context of fragments of his direct interior monologue and resemble his earlier conception of himself as the leader of the charge of the Light Brigade. Mr. Ramsay is the naval captain with "qualities that would have saved a ship's company exposed on a broiling sea with six biscuits and a flask of water—endurance and justice, foresight, devotion, skill" (*TTL*, 54); he is the leader of a polar expedition "whose temper, neither sanguine nor despondent, surveys with equanimity what is to be and faces it" (*TTL*, 54); and a mountaineer who "knows that he must lay himself down and die before morning comes" (*TTL*, 55); a man who feels these roles so strongly that he acquires (to what observing eye?) "even in the two minutes of his turn on the terrace, the bleached look of withered old age" (*TTL*, 55). After an extended passage in which a direct style, lacking only quotation marks—"How many men in a thousand million, he asked himself, reach Z after all? . . . And what are two thousand years [of fame]? (asked Mr. Ramsay ironically, staring at the hedge)"—mingles with what is clearly free indirect style, the chapter ends with another ambiguous paragraph in which each sentence takes the form of a rhetorical question, apparently direct authorial address to the reader. The last, one of Woolf's "circular," loose sentences which blends deliciously the sublime and the ridiculous, maintains the ambiguity of point of view to the end:

> Who will not secretly rejoice when the hero puts his armour off, and halts by the window and gazes at his wife and son, who, very distant at first, gradually come closer and closer, till lips and book and head are clearly before him, though still lovely and unfamiliar from the intensity of his isolation and the waste of ages and the perishing of the stars, and finally putting his pipe in his pocket and bending his magnificent head before her—who will blame him if he does homage to the beauty of the world? (*TTL*, 57)

If this account is authorial, it would seem definitely ironic, mock-heroic. But if these are Mr. Ramsay's own thoughts rendered in free indirect style, blending with neutral third-person reporting of his physical action, how are we to evaluate them? Surely his represented preoccupation with the letters of the alphabet rather than an actual philosophical problem has already made him ludicrous to us, as has his wife's vision of him earlier in the chapter as "the great sea lion at the Zoo tumbling backwards after swallowing his fish and walloping off so that the water in the tank washes from side to side" (*TTL*, 52). The entire passage strikes me as intentionally humorous, with its clichés and wildly incongruous exaggerations, yet Mr. Ramsay obviously takes himself very seriously. It is the indirect mode, the constant possibility of authorial manipulation, that supplies the distance which enables us not only to recognize Mr. Ramsay's vanity but to sympathize with him: who can blame him, indeed? Who has not shared, in some sense, his fantasies?

The narrator is separate, is in a sense omniscient, but subjectively so. She offers no absolute knowledge or judgment of Mr. Ramsay. He is at once lovable and outrageous, appealing and foolish. It is a character, James Ramsay, who articulates the only truth the book offers as incontrovertible: "nothing was simply one thing" (*TTL*, 277); and another character, Lily Briscoe, who foreshadows that truth and in a way extrapolates it: "The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark" (*TTL*, 240). The passage considered offers one such illumination about Mr. Ramsay; others, complicating his character further, are to come.

As in *Mrs. Dalloway*, the authorial narrator is used to provide the link between the separate consciousnesses who are her characters. J. Hillis Miller writes:

> [The] notion of a union of each mind in its depths with all the other minds and with a universal, impersonal mind for which the narrator speaks is confirmed by those notations in *A Writer's Diary* in which, while writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf speaks of her 'great discovery,' what she calls her 'tunnelling process,' that method whereby, as she says, 'I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters; I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humor, depth. The idea is that the caves shall connect.' [34]

[34] Miller, p. 107. See also Naremore's general argument that Woolf uses omniscience precisely to give the sense of self-transcendence.

The connection is achieved technically in part by having the characters contemplate the same objects with similar emotions or images, but primarily through the uniformity of style and consistency of viewpoint of the narrator.

The ubiquitous interplay of irony and ambiguity created by the narrative method of *To The Lighthouse*, in which authorial presence mingles freely with the characters' streams of consciousness, is a touchstone of its impressionism. We have before us the interior views of the characters now alternately, now inextricably fused with the superior, but still subjectively limited, vision of the author. Woolf's style, with its peculiar juxtapositions of long, cumulative sentences and short kernal sentences; her imagery of sea and wind, of music, of light, shape, and shadow; her dependence upon the present participle for much of her modification; upon "squinting" phrases and clauses that can be attributed to more than one character or to character and author, keeps her at all times present in the narrative, even as the differentiating features of the individual characters, with their obsessions, their private image patterns, emerge. Equivalent arguments can easily be made about the styles and substances of *Madame Bovary* and *The Ambassadors*. For the authors to disappear from these works is inconceivable. It is in this multiple presence or vision, rather than in limiting the experience to the characters' perspectives, that impressionism inheres.

Thus it is unnecessary for Ian Watt to refer to James's "multiple Impressionism" as "idiosyncratic because the dual presence of Strether's consciousness and of that of the narrator, who translates what he sees there into more general terms, makes the narrative point of view both intensely individual and yet ultimately social."[35] The dual or multiple presence is emphatically not peculiar to James among the impressionists, as I have shown with Flaubert and Woolf, and as any purposeful expedition into the third-person narratives of Conrad, Ford, and Crane will confirm. The simultaneous or serial presence of multiple subjects' "points of view" is part and parcel of the impressionist vision. The fact that characters frequently hold similar conceptions of their situation, that the formation of a consensus or convergence of views so frequently culminates the plot of later impressionist fictions—sometimes constituting a "happy" ending, as in *To The Lighthouse*—indicates a hopeful solution to the philosophers'

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[35] Watt, p. 474.

" question of privacy ": the problem of individual isolation when all reality is subjective. The novel itself seems to prove that a shared experience of reality, partial if not total, is possible, both within the fictional world of such a book as *To The Lighthouse* and shared among the (implied) author and the (implied) readers, once we are willing to agree that reality is multivalent, and if we can maintain a stance of concurrent observation and participation.

Ambiguity of perspective gives the " hazy " effect so often ascribed to impressionist fiction as well as painting, for we never—or almost never—see the characters without a sense of the intervening authorial presence. As Monet's vision of haystacks becomes the dominant " impression " we take away from an experience of one of his paintings, so Flaubert's and James's and Woolf's conception of their subjects epitomizes the impressionism of their fiction. While later writers have developed techniques enabling the author to more thoroughly hide himself in the texture of his narrative, the disappearance of the author, as we have seen, is not the essential element which governs and defines the identification of a fiction as impressionist, at least if the term describes the work of Flaubert, James, Conrad, Ford, and Woolf. If later works, in which the author has successfully effaced himself, are to be seen as impressionist, it is only by virtue of the fact that the reader has learned, in experiencing the works of the classic period of impressionism, to adopt the distance necessary to attain the multiple perspective independently, to read third-person narration with the same caution and alertness to incongruity he exercises in reading first-person narratives. When the work lacks the sense of the " general consciousness or social mind " linking the experience of the characters with that of the reader and constituting authorial voice, we have gone outside impressionism and into some other kind of writing. The effaced narration of " Hills Like White Elephants " implies a world view in which reality is univalent and knowable through appearances; while the elusive, style-shifting author of *Ulysses* proposes a world not merely half-created, half-perceived by its inhabitants, but one almost infinitely creatable through the applications of different linguistic codes, a world in which intersubjective consensus is ruled out by the incompatibility of the styles used to create that world. Between these poles at which the authors truly disappear lies the broad middle ground of impressionist fiction, where the author remains both within and beyond his characters, a presence both immanent and self-revealing, bestowing upon his creation both guidance and freedom, knowledge and a limit to knowledge.

Book Reviews

"The Greening of Charles Olson" by Marjorie Perloff

Charles Olson: Call Him Ishmael by Paul Christensen. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1978. Pp. xi + 244. $12.95.

Charles Olson: The Scholar's Art by Robert von Hallberg. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1978. Pp. ix + 252. $14.00.

Olson's Push: Origin, Black Mountain and Recent American Poetry by Sherman Paul. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1978. Pp. xviii + 291. $14.95.

This is, as everyone has remarked, a vintage year for Charles Olson studies; aside from the three books under review, there is George Butterick's monumental *Guide to the Maximus Poems* (University of California Press, 1978). Four scholarly books, then, on a poet some believe to be, as does Sherman Paul, the central poet of his time, the rightful heir of Emerson and Whitman, while others, like Harold Bloom, have given Wallace Stevens, a poet as antithetical as possible to Olson, the very same title. Still others, most notably the post-Structuralists, whose eye is turned not to Emerson but to the continent, barely seem to know of Olson's existence. We thus have a peculiar anomaly. A byword in the pages of *Boundary 2, a Journal of Postmodern Literature*, Olson's name does not so much as appear in the index to Matei Calinescu's recent *Avant-Garde, Decadence, and Kitsch* (Indiana University Press, 1978), a book which is also about postmodernism. Whose postmodernism is the real thing? Is there a real thing? Olson's poetry and poetics raise some of the most interesting theoretical issues confronting us today and it is these issues, rather than the specific interpretations of Olson texts found in the three books under review, that I wish to discuss here.

Paul Christensen's stated premise is that "the essential Olson lies somewhere in a momentous rejection of a culture, a civilization, the values and philosophy of which have gradually diminished the unruly vitality of human awareness. Everything Olson wrote—the essays, the poems, the rambling harangues—speak to this one concern: how to restore to human beings their own primal energies" (pp. 21-22). The same prophetic thrust is admired by Sherman Paul:

> . . . there was a hiatus between the wars and the 'advances' of the innovators, especially Pound and Williams, were not carried forward until Olson and the writers of his generation recovered that ground and began to build on it. The recovery and redirection of the poetic tradition—and it reaches back beyond Pound and Williams to Emerson and Whitman—is one measure of the importance of Olson's work. It is part of a new sally of the human spirit. . . . (p. xvi)

Projective verse, as Olson conceived of it, is, for both Paul and Christensen, "a poetics of present experience, of enactment. It replaces spectatorism with participation, and brings the whole self—the single intelligence: body, mind, soul—to the activity of creation" (Paul, p. 39).

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Robert von Hallberg, whose book is the most challenging of the three, is more cautious about the Great Tradition: "The premise of this book is that Olson deserves close attention precisely because his poems do not conform to what modern critics have argued is essentially poetic" (p. 2). Olson's is an expository poetry, designed less to delight than to teach; it is "offered as explanation and understanding, not as expression" (p. 3). Accordingly, there is no point in submitting this poetry to formal verbal analysis, to look for "delicate shades of irony," metrical niceties, or constitutive image patterns. Like Hesiod, whose *Works and Days* and *Theogony* stand squarely behind Olson's work, he regards his role as essentially didactic.

Both von Hallberg and Christensen trace Olson's origins as a poet back to his withdrawal from government service at the end of World War II, a withdrawal prompted by his disillusionment with "postwar American imperialism" and "hypocrisy" (H, p. 12), and his consequent search for a new frontier, first in the American past (See *Call Me Ishmael*, admirably elucidated by Christensen), and then in such historical and cultural outposts as those of the Maya and the Sumerians. How the matter of Sumer and the Yucatan rather than the matter of Greece and Rome (cf. Pound) is assimilated into the epic of Maximus–postmodern man in search of the new *polis* in his native Gloucester, Mass.–is a major concern of all three studies, and it should be said at once that, despite all their talk of "field composition" and "projective poetics," Christensen and Paul are at least as concerned with content as is von Hallberg. Indeed, all three studies are essentially explicative: they analyze what Olsen *says*, both in his poems and in his difficult prose, and trace the sources of his "philosophy."

To see what such exegesis can and cannot do, let me summarize the three readings of "The Kingfishers," a poem which Guy Davenport has called "the most energetically influential text of the last thirty-five years," a text that "divides decisively Modern from Postmodern poetry."[1]

Sherman Paul devotes the better part of his first chapter to "The Kingfishers," which he calls "as important to Olson's work as 'The Second Coming' is to Yeats's" (p. 8). In this "Poundian poem," collage is the structural principle, and so "we should no more be surprised to find a transposition from the article on kingsfishers in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (11th edition) than to find Mao's words" ("The light of the dawn is before us").[2] But, unlike Pound, Olson stresses forward movement:

> "What does not change/is the will to change" becomes "When the attentions change/the jungle//leaps in"–the slight alteration, the break after "jungle," owing to Olson's wish to enact the leap. (p. 19)[3]

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[1] "Scholia and Conjectures for Olson's 'The Kingfishers,'" *Boundary 2*, 2 (1973/1974), 251; "In Gloom on Watch-House Point," *Parnassus: Poetry in Review*, 4 (1976), 253.

[2] For the text of "The Kingfishers," see Charles Olson, *The Distances* (New York: Grove Press, 1960), pp. 5-11.

[3] Since Olson frequently uses the slant line (/) within a line, I follow Sherman Paul's practice of marking line breaks by a double slant line (//).

Whereas Pound looked to Classical civilization for the sources of renewal, Olson turns to Amerindian and Eastern culture, deploying images like the "E on the stone" and the Aztec burial mound so as to show that only by going outside our own civilization can there be hope for renewal. Further, Olson contrasts the evil change embodied in Cortez's conquest of Mexico (or of warfare in general) to change-in-process: Ammonius' speech in Plutarch's "The E at Delphi" that "Into the same river no man steps twice." Ultimately, the poet turns from Pound ("I am no Greek: hath not th'advantage") to Rimbaud:

> si j'ai du goût, ce n'est guères
> que pour la terre et les pierres [4]

Paul glosses these lines by a passage from Olson's *The Special View of History:* "It is this which Heraclitus meant when he laid down the law which was vitiated by Socrates and only restored by Rimbaud: that man is estranged from that [with] which he is most familiar" (p. 28). One must learn to be at home in the physical world. And so "The Kingfishers" concludes with the poet hunting among stones, "in order to receive . . . some valuable lessons of renewal" (p. 28).

Paul Christensen's reading of "The Kingfishers" pursues similar themes. After describing the poem's structure as that of "*montage* or *collage*," Christensen observes:

> Each of the three main sections of the poem builds on the accumulation of detail which the previous section introduced. . . . The E ("on the stone") refers to a cultural order that has disappeared in the historical process: reduced, possibly, to a mere character, but expressive of a civilization, a *polis* that had at one time achieved a high level of integrity and etched its mark upon the center of its defined world, on a navel stone. Mao's words depict a world fallen into corruption, the state of cultural disintegration from which he must now rise, looking into the rising sun as a complex symbol of renewal and illumination. (p. 96)

And the kingfisher itself becomes "the central metaphor of change itself; for its constancy is composed of the rhythms of renewal and decay." In Section III, the speaker discovers his kinship to the conquered Aztecs and rejects the Greco-Roman heritage in favor of the Indian; he rejects "the status quo, which he has already described as a 'pudor pejorocracy'" in favor of his will to "hunt among stones." The poem, concludes Christensen, "communicates concretely . . . the anxiety of the speaker to find a culture in which change is understood, not fought or ignored to some tragic or brutal end" (p. 99).

Von Hallberg comments chiefly on the function of Mao in the poem and then argues that "Olson's freedom from history allows him to shift idioms abruptly, without warning, without explanation:

> I am no Greek, hath not th'advantage." (p. 19)

[4] The source is Rimbaud's "Fêtes de la faim"; Wallace Fowlie translates the lines: "If I have any taste, it is for hardly/Anything but earth and stones." See Wallace Fowlie (trans.), Rimbaud, *Complete Works, Selected Letters* (Chicago: Phoenix Books, 1967), pp. 146-147.

Von Hallberg notes: "The poetic advantages of this posthistorical language are clear, especially in American poetry: the poet can go outside his tradition, without apologies, to get what he wants." But he adds with slight asperity, "The cost is no less high, however. This hodgepodge of diction can cohere only with the force of a strong but still individual voice." Presumably the voice of "The Kingfishers," if not of certain other Olson poems, meets this test. The important thing, in any case, is the poem's lesson which is that "Change itself is the goal." Mao, for that matter, functions less as specific Communist revolutionary than as the incarnation of "the will to change."

There is, one concludes, general agreement as to what "The Kingfishers" means; on this level, Sherman Paul's careful analysis is especially persuasive. But Paul and Christensen, and to a lesser extent von Hallberg, regularly jump from such semantic analysis to conclusions that seem to have less to do with the texts under discussion than with Olson's repeated insistence, in his essays and interviews, that he was doing something *new*. Indeed, here, as in almost all critical discussion of Olson by his adherents, an old-fashioned intentionalism clouds the real issues. Let me elaborate.

(1) It is regularly assumed that "The Kingfishers" marks what Robert Duncan has called "the opening of the field," the move away from "the formalist (New Critical) closed conception of the poem and with it a cosmology and epistemology of the kind that underlay symbolism" (Paul, p. xvi). "'The Kingfishers,'" says Paul, "is an open form permitting the poet, as Allen Ginsberg says, to score the development of his ideas"; it is "above all . . . an action" (p. 11). Olson's essays make clear, Paul argues, that "true poetry . . . is not symbolist, and he invokes the dance not in the service of the transcendent but of the immanent, as a practical discipline of body consciousness–of proprioception. . . . he speaks always as a participant and not as an observer" (p. 88).

Von Hallberg has a subchapter called "Anti-Symbolism," in which he quotes such famous Olson statements as "It doesn't take much thought over Bill [Williams'] proposition–'Not in ideas but in things'–to be sure that any of us intend an image as a 'thing,' never, so far as we know, such a non-animal as symbol" (H, 45).[5] Allegiance to Williams' dictate means "absolute opposition to Eliot, whom Olson recognized to be in the Symbolist tradition" (H, p. 45). For "the Symbolists aspire to an order of reality beyond the mundane experiences of actual people, beyond what Mallarmé calls 'ici-bas.' The function of this non-mimetic art is to express the yearning to transcend. Olsen, though, had no desire to write off the mundane and the actual" (H, p. 46). In the same vein, Christensen sees Olson's poetry as essentially "logopoetic" rather than "imagistic" and talks of his rejection of Eliot and the Imagist Pound (pp. 78-79). "'The Kingfishers,'" he writes, "is a model of the projectivist poetic executed successfully," a work that shows "not the image but the forming of the image in the mind of the observer" (p. 99). Like Paul and von Hallberg, Christensen relates this and other poems to the famous manifesto "Projective Verse," with its call for "FIELD COMPOSITION," poetry as "energy discharge," the credo that

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[5] See "On Poets and Poetry," *Human Universe and Other Essays*, ed. Donald Allen (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 65. Subsequently cited as HU. Note that Olson misquotes Williams' famous "Not ideas but in things!"

"ONE PERCEPTION MUST IMMEDIATELY AND DIRECTLY LEAD TO A FURTHER PERCEPTION. . . . get on with it, keep moving . . . USE USE USE the process at all points."[6]

But the readings of "The Kingfishers" which I have cited above give us little sense of the poem as open field, as process or energy discharge. If the opening line, set off by itself, is, as Paul says, "a text for meditation. containing the poem that activity of thought unfolds" (p. 11), one could argue that, Olson's poetics to the contrary, "The Kingfishers" is the perfect example of a closed poem. Olson knows from the beginning precisely where he is going; he marshals his properties–symbolic birds, the "E on the stone," "what Mao said," the Aztec burial mound, the plunder of Cortez, Fernand talking "lispingly of Albers and Angkor Vat"–and orchestrates them so as to create a very definite dialectic. Thus, as Christensen notes, "The loot taken by Cortez in his conquest of Mexico is listed carefully as a preface to the last" (p. 97); or again, "the feed-back is/the law" (I, 4) leads to the search for a usable past in Part II (P, p. 23). Olson, according to von Hallberg, "had no desire to write off the mundane and the actual," but do we in fact find more "mundane" or "actual" images here than in, say, *The Waste Land?* Or, for that matter, in what sense is "The Kingfishers" more of an energy discharge than Eliot's great collage poem with its sudden cuts from "I read much of the night, and go south in the winter" to "What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow/out of this stony rubbish?", or from the "broken fingernails" of the girl "On Margate sands" to the fragment "To Carthage then I came" in "The Fire Sermon?"

Indeed, Olson's poetic father may well have been Eliot rather than those "predecessors" he chose for himself–Pound and Williams. Here Harold Bloom's "anxiety of influence" should be taken into account. Olson, like so many poets of his time, railed long and loud against Eliot. But Sherman Paul himself points out that the kingfisher image echoes *Burnt Norton:*

> After the kingfisher's wing
> Has answered light to light, and is silent, the light is still
> At the still point of the turning world.

He rightly observes that Olson inverts Eliot's meaning: his "secular" kingfisher becomes the symbol of change, not of the still point (P, p. 12). But the point is surely that in the "postmodern" as in the "modern" poem, the kingfishers are never primarily "the mundane and the actual"; they are, on the contrary, consistently designated as emblematic. And even Fernand, the lisping Frenchman who talks of "Albers and Angkor Vat," is quite unlike Pound's characters–"Fordie," "Uncle William," "poor old Homer blind as a bat"–characters who are recalled precisely for their individuality. The poet "thought of Fernand" because he must have, at the outset of his poem, a representative of the effete, decadent Europe, a culture that fails to comprehend the significance of the Maya.

Compare "The Kingfishers" to a genuinely postmodern poem like Ashbery's "Pyrography" or to a text like Beckett's "Ping," and the difference becomes clear. Even the allusion to Rimbaud in Part III betrays Olson's real bent. Rimbaud's "Fêtes de la faim" is not, as Paul, following Olson, seems to think, about anything so simple as the need to return to the earth, to live "the physical life." For Rimbaud, such descent into the earth is always related to thirst: the liquifaction of rock renews the poet's creative force ("la future vigeur"). But Olson's Rimbaud is a symbol of Natural Man as opposed to Cultured Man (the Pound who wants to judge our civilization in terms of Classical models). And Natural Man, in this systematic poem, must learn to hunt among stones.

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[6] See "Projective Verse," *Selected Writings of Charles Olson*, ed. Robert Creeley (New York: New Directions, 1966), pp. 16-17. This text is subsequently cited as SW.

(2) Olson, the inventor of "anti-symbolist" fields of action. This is one aspect of the myth. A closely related one has to do with Olson the Objectist. The central text here is again "Projective Verse," in which "Objectism" (despite Olson's protests to the contrary, the term is roughly equivalent to "objectivism" as Zukofsky and his circle undersood it) is defined as "the getting rid of the lyrical interference of the individual as ego, of the 'subject' and his soul, that peculiar presumption by which western man has interposed himself between what he is as a creature of nature . . . and those creations of nature which we may with no derogation, call objects. For a man is himself an object" (HU, pp. 59-60). And in a related essay, "Equal, That Is, to the Real Itself," Olson aligns himself with Keats as a poet of Negative Capability (HU, p. 116).

Taking his lead from Olson, Sherman Paul distinguishes between the Jungian Self and Ego, as they appear in *The Maximus Poems:* "The self in its own space-time is the essential formal element of the poems, and its story, the sequence of its occasions, is the essential narrative. Not the 'EGO AS BEAK'" (p. 118). But here is Paul's comment on the passage in "I, Maximus of Gloucester, to You" that culminates in the lines:

o kill kill kill kill kill
those
who advertise you
out)

> Lear's cry of outrage . . . is the extreme expression of revulsion and identifies both an object of hate and a moral direction. . . . They [movies, magazines, radio, advertising] are plagues to Maximus . . . because like muzak, they distract us, keep us from hearing what we have just heard . . . and in his poem they name a late stage of capitalism—the consumer he opposes to the early productive capitalist of the fishery—and an action . . . which relates our estrangement from the familiar world to the misuse of language. (p. 126)

No doubt this is an accurate account of what Olson wants to convey to his reader in this, his first Maximus poem. But where is the "objectism" he has advocated? The "interference" of the ego may not be "lyrical"—it is true that Olson is not a confessional poet—but for pure unadulterated "egotistical sublime" it is hard to beat this and a hundred similar passages in *Maximus.*

Christensen and von Hallberg are more cautious: they admit that Olson's poetry does not always embody the Objectist poetic, which both relate quite rightly to Whitehead, especially to the doctrine that "the things experienced and the cognisant subject enter into the common world on equal terms." "All actual things," wrote Whitehead in *Process and Reality*, "are subjects, each prehending the universe from which it arises." Olson scribbled in the margin of his copy: "the End of the Subject-object thing—wow!" (von Hallberg, p. 113). But despite that "wow!" it is not clear to me how subject and object enter into the common world on equal terms in, for example, "The Librarian," which Von Hallberg cites as an instance of successful "objectism." It is true that in the course of this, one of Olson's finest poems, Gloucester may be said to enter the poet's mind:

> Where is
> Bristow? when does I-A
> get me home? I am caught
> in Gloucester. (SW, p. 219)

But the process of internalization does not seem essentially different from, say, the movement in Stevens' "The Snow Man" or in Lawrence's "Bat." Again, when Christensen says of *Maximus* that "The desire is to make Gloucester become continuous with himself so that there are no longer barriers of subject and object between them" (p. 121), he is simply accepting Olson's word for it and hence contradicting his own accounts of what that "subject" repeatedly *says about* the "objects" in its field. A page after the previous statement, for example, Christensen writes: And Maximus regards the people of Gloucester as having been corrupted by the commoditization of all aspects of life:

> love is not easy
> but how shall you know,
> New England, now
> that pejorocracy is here, ..."
> (MI, p. 3, cited by Christensen, p. 123)

Reading such lines, we do know, I think, that the "subject," Olson the Preacher, and the object, the New England "pejorocracy" as seen in the particulars of modern Gloucester, are not one.

(3) Although Paul and Christensen make greater claims for Olson as a poet than does von Hallberg, they agree with him that Olson was perhaps most remarkable as a teacher. Christensen's long chapter on Olson's influence on the Black Mountain poets—an influence stubbornly claimed by Creeley, Duncan, Dorn, Blackburn, and others, even though it is much less evident in their actual poems than in their interviews and statements of poetic—makes the case for the "enormous impact" (C, p. 161) Olson's doctrines had on younger poets. "For him," says Sherman Paul, "the true relation between people was pedagogic—and it was chiefly in the generous way of his teaching that he gave pleasure and consolation" (pp. 247-248).

What, then, does Olson teach us? Paul sees him as the apostle of Emerson's "Party of Hope," the Party of Nature versus Culture, teaching us that we can fill space with our own projections and rediscover wholeness by our contact with the Great Mother. In mapping the geography and history of Gloucester, "he showed use how to find place . . . because it has a history. . . . We repossess place in repossessing the experience of it. *Polis is eyes*" (p. 356).

In short, "an ecological vision" as Paul calls it (p. xviii). Christensen puts it a bit differently: "Olson's canon has within it a potent utterance: life is strangled by systems. Existence has an order than cannot be isolated from nature" (p. 212). The poet must be "the measure of awareness . . . that lone human figure thrust deep into the uncertainty of the real, where he lives and expresses himself joyfully and is ultimately joined by others."

No one is likely to quarrel with these generalizations. But in the course of interpreting specific poems, all three critics make us swallow any number of statements that strike a non-member of the Olson Club as misguided when not downright silly. Here are some random examples:

> . . . Olson admired Mao for insisting that the revolution be not just political or economic but above all cultural. In 1952 Olson believed that New England was to be the center of a cultural revolution. . . . (H, p. 21)
>
> What Olson decries is the movement away from labor, the development of capitalism. Parasitic absentee ownership is the source of corruption in Letter 3. (H, p. 60)
>
> At the moment [1951], however, one conclusion was already evident to [Olson]: Mayan art, which had sprung from sources beyond Greco-Roman influence, expressed a more intense human attention to human experience than did Western art. (C, p. 18)
>
> The issue lying beneath the surface of the letters in Book II is that while the Puritans chose to settle in New England and create "the city of God," rooted within their own devout religiosity was the impetus to succeed individually. . . . (C, p. 130)
>
> To sustain, nourish, increase, advance, make daily life a dignity—this is polis . . . The modern hero (post-Dante) lacks the first will to coherence. [In contrast to the Sumerian model described in "Human Universe"] His is a "contrary will" to dispersion, to destruction. . . . his heroism is not defined in terms of cultural achievement but in terms of the spoliation of nature. . . . (P, pp. 72-73)
>
> 450 B.C., the only date in the essay ["Human Universe"] . . . locates the advent of the Greek system, the crucial moment when logos displaced "live speech," and discourse itself became an arbitrary, closed universe. (P, p. 82)
>
> Here [Letter 13] indeed is a "dreamless present" of "merchandise men" in which it is impossible to move, in which the truth and promise of the New World has been betrayed by lies, and the Goddess, embalmed, is merely Jean Harlow (the sex symbol of Olson's youth), "As she lies, all/white." (P, p. 151)

Lest I be accused of taking these statements out of context, let me assure the reader that all are paraphrases or explanations of Olson's arguments rather than independent value judgments on the part of the respective critic. But what seems so remarkable is that the commentators consistently refer to these doctrinal statements as if they were (a) original and exciting and (b) true. This is not the place to test Olson's "special view of history" or mythology, but suffice it to say that any intellectual who is not directly involved with the study of modern American literature would probably find these notions simplistic and banal, if not just plain wrong. How can one take seriously a didactic poet who teaches us that after 450 B.C. "discourse itself became an arbitrary, closed universe," that the Sumerians or Maya should be our models for behavior, that the Puritans were just greedy and competitive capitalists? In discussing Pound, critics generally admit that the treatment of usury as the source of all evil is misguided, but how much more complex or valuable are Olson's economic and historical theories?

Von Hallberg does admit that the later Maximus Poems fall apart, that "Olson seems to have resigned himself to teaching by example rather than precept" (H, p. 42). He concludes:

> American literary culture appears to have no way of handling a poet like Olson, committed to a pedagogical and rhetorical poetics, short of labeling him a shaman, and Olson perhaps had no experience at rejecting what was, after all, flattery. If this was the case, it is not hard to see why his later poetry was egocentric, though it is depressing to witness how, almost routinely, contemporary culture can corrupt so ambitious and so American a poet. (p. 216)

It *is* depressing but the problem is larger than von Hallberg suggests. To understand the Olson cult, we must consider the increasing isolation of the poet in postwar America. Anthropologists. archeologists, historians, political scientists—these are the intellectuals who might shed light on Olson's "causal mythology." But of course they don't read Olson or, for that matter, any contemporary poetry. The literary people who do—mostly in the academy despite the claim of Olsonites to be anti-academic—are unfortunately susceptible to the large doses of anti-rationalist, primitivist doctrine in the air. It was the Literary Establishment, after all, that hailed Charles Reich as a seminal thinker.

With the demise of the New Criticism, value judgments and literary norms have become increasingly suspect; no one dares to say that a poem *should* have certain qualities or meet certain standards. At the same time, post-structuralist critics are busy applying increasingly sophisticated analytic tools to what are, in fact, certified texts—Rousseau's *Confessions*, Poe's *Purloined Letter*, Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*—so that, again, problems of value don't arise. The result, for practical criticism, is defensive exposition. In this sense, the new Olson books are typical: if you already admire Olson, these books will give you reasons to admire him still more and will provide some sturdy support for your enthusiasm. If you don't, they are not likely to change your mind. The notable achievement of von Hallberg's book is that at least it raises the right questions, asking us to consider in what if any sense Olson has claims to being a major poet.

In the years to come, we will be rethinking these issues, sorting out the valuable Olson from the "plosions of obfuscatory verbiage," found all too frequently in the later Maximus poems.[7] In the meantime, we have three scholarly and valuable guidebooks that tell us what Olson's difficult poetry is all about and place it in its historical context. As a general introduction, Paul Christensen's *Charles Olson* is especially good; as a commentary on *The Maximus Poems*, Sherman Paul's *Olson's Push* is an indispensable supplement. But both books convince me that Olson was, in fact, less the father of postmodernism than he was the last of the great system-builders. Who nowadays tries to write a poetry encompassing ancient history, myth, geography, religion, philosophy, the new mathematics and physics, American politics? Our poetry has become more modest; it tries to define life as it is lived (or invented, or dreamed) rather than the abstract "human universe." Like Eliot's Hieronimo at the close of *The Waste Land*, Olson might have said: "These fragments I have shored against my ruins." But in the "postmodern" universe of 1980, we are perhaps less fearful of fragments. And from this vantage point, a poem like "In Cold Hell, In Thicket" (1951) is beginning to look positively traditional.

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[7] The phrase is Hugh Kenner's; see *A Homemade World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), p. 182.

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The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response by Wolfgang Iser. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978. Pp. xii + 239. $15.00.

During the past ten years, American criticism has undergone a Copernican revolution. Attention has shifted from the literary work itself to our ways of perceiving it, and the autonomous verbal icon postulated by the New Critics has been displaced by theories of literary competence and reader response. As might have been expected, this shift has created as many critical problems as it has solved. Who is the reader? Like the literary work, he turns out to be either a concept (Riffaterre's "super-reader," Fish's "informed reader," Wolff's "intended reader") or a particular, perhaps uncharacteristic example (the students studied by Norman Holland, Walter Slatoff, and David Bleich). At best, he is simply a brilliant critic who caresses or mauls texts (Barthes). German theorists of reader response have pointed out that the reader and the text are both hypothetical entities: to study either apart from the other is to disregard the fact that they exist only when interacting. By basing their theories on the phenomenological tradition and studying literary experience itself, Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser have avoided conceptual dilemmas evident in many American theories. Jauss's studies of literary reception (in particular *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik*, 1977) draw on the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer. Iser, beginning from Ingarden's conception of literature, has during the past ten years developed what is probably the most useful theory of reader response currently available.

The gist of Iser's theory is contained in his essay "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," published in *New Literary History* (1972) and reprinted in *The Implied Reader* (1974). In *The Act of Reading*, he fills in the framework presented in that essay and shows that a number of disciplines (Gestalt and social psychology, information theory, speech-act theory, and philosophy) lend support to his basic assumptions. From Ingarden, he takes the conception of the literary work as a schematic formation that acquires a determinate structure and meaning only when a reader fills in what it lacks and synthesizes it in his imagination. In Iser's words, "the iconic signs of literature do not serve to designate a signified object, but instead designate *instructions* for the *production* of the signified" (p. 65). Since the reader produces the literary work, and at the same time the work produces his awareness of it, analysis must begin from literary experience, which empirically and theoretically precedes all subject-object distinctions.

It is impossible to provide an adequate summary of Iser's theory in this context, but its fundamental features deserve mention. Ingarden, important as he is, remained attached to a static conception of literature. Only after describing the literary work did he attempt to provide an account of how it is "concretized" in reading. Iser's most important contribution to phenomenological aesthetics is his analysis of the temporal dynamics of literary experience. As the reader moves through a fictional text, encountering a sequence of disjunct viewpoints, descriptions, and analyses, he is constantly attempting to integrate them. The synthesis achieved at any particular point, which results from his effort to fill in gaps and resolve disparities, will be altered by new information when he reads further. As a result, both his expectations regarding the outcome of the action and his assessment of what has gone before are subject to continuous alteration. This, as we know, is the *experience* of reading, but its effects and consequences have seldom been analyzed.

Emphasis on the temporality of literary experience sheds new light on traditional critical problems. Most theorists cannot provide a convincing account of why interpretations differ so radically. On the assumption that the literary work is a determinate object, they conclude that differences in interpretation result from differences in readers. But the literary work is in fact neither a real nor an ideal object, neither universally determinate nor autonomous; as Ingarden said, it is "in principle incomplete." In order to understand it, we endow its schemata with concreteness and integrate them in relation to implied frames of reference (involving motive and consequence, ethical systems, social norms, and literary conventions—the fictional "repertoire," in Iser's terminology). The "blanks" in the text—conceptual spaces between elements of the repertoire—can be filled in various ways when the reader brings the literary object into being. Several different structures of coherence can be posited for a fictional text, quite apart from the varied sorts of "significance" that result when its general meaning is attached to particular spheres of reference.

Iser recognizes that the determinacy of textual meaning is conditioned by the author's intentions and his historical situation. Didactic writers tend to foreclose options of interpretation, and the evolution of the novel has involved an expansion of interpretive possibilities. Apart from extreme didacticism, however, fiction has always made use of conflicting viewpoints that lead to a questioning or negation of accepted norms. Iser's theory of the relationship between literary innovation and the conventional "repertoire" appears to have something in common with formalist and structuralist theories of defamiliarization and deviation. Even after he has explained why such similarities are misleading, there is reason to think that structuralism and semiotics are not incompatible with his theory and might in fact adapt it to their ends. In doing so, they would free themselves from static frameworks and reductive descriptions. At the same time, they might make Iser's account of the "repertoire" of fiction more precise and aid him in defining the relationship between "background" and "foreground" in literary texts.

Unlike many theories, which merely serve to justify the activities of the critic who proposes them, Iser's account of aesthetic response will prove generally useful. Although he has not resolved all the issues that he considers relevant to his theory (his discussion of the "image," for example, seems dated in relation to current research), he provides a reasoned foundation on which others may build. For those critics who believe that there is a categorical distinction between literary and non-literary texts, that literary meaning is in some sense transcendent and uniquely valuable, and that literary analysis can be intellectual without being reductive, Iser will prove a useful ally. In other words, he deserves the careful attention of American critics who oppose deconstruction but wish to revitalize the fundamental assumptions of the New Criticism. He himself says nothing about deconstruction and, despite his recognition of the negativity underlying literary production, he leaves himself particularly vulnerable to deconstructionist assaults. Quite apart from polemics, however, *The Act of Reading* is one of the few recent books on critical theory that will repay the attention of scholars and teachers who seek a useful account of the reader's role in the creation of literature.

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The Failure of Criticism by Eugene Goodheart. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1978. Pp. 203. $13.50.

What is Literature? edited by Paul Hernadi. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978. Pp. 257. $12.50.

What is Criticism? What is Literature?

The books under review ask the two fundamental questions which literary scholars must deal with, implicitly or explicitly, both as researchers and as teachers. The title of Eugene Goodheart's essay implies an even more vital concern, since "criticism" must here be taken to mean "humanism" (p. 27). Goodheart explains his title in an Introduction which is then followed by nine loosely-related essays whose chapter headings will help us summarize the book's intent: Modernism and the Critical Spirit; English Social Criticism and the Spirit of Reformation; The Reality of Disillusion in T. S. Eliot; The Organic Society of F. R. Leavis; A Postscript to the Higher Criticism: The Case of Philip Rieff; the Formalist Avant-Garde and the Autonomy of Aesthetic Values; Aristocrats and Jacobins: The Happy Few of [Stendhal's] *The Charterhouse of Parma*; Flaubert and the Powerlessness of Art; The Blasphemy of Joycean Art. There is no Conclusion since, I suppose, an essay has no thesis to prove but the assertions of an Introduction to illustrate.

Professor Goodheart's book is moderate in its rhetoric, intelligent and balanced in the condemnation of "modernism." He is well aware that "the decline of critical standards can be dated no more precisely than the fall of man" (p. 1). Yet, despite such disclaimers, the book is built upon certainties buttressed by casual observations of the impressionistic, "humanist critical" type. The book takes for granted what surely must be seen as a series of bold working hypotheses which, *at best*, may partly apply to a significant number of important authors:

> I have followed the suggestion of Carlyle and Arnold that literature is a branch of religion and revised Eliot's statement that a key to an understanding of most contemporary Anglo-Saxon literature is the decay of Protestantism. Modern literature can be fruitfully viewed as a dialectic between the Protestant-inspired, largely English tradition from Carlyle to Lawrence and the Catholic-inspired literary modernism of Flaubert, Joyce, and Eliot. (p. 6)

The book continues with this dismaying love for generalizations, with a lack of social or historical seriousness and an assumption that someone's "suggestion" need only be taken up and followed through, not tested or questioned in some way. I suppose that being systematic and sparing in one's hypotheses would be boring, unhumanistic and above all disquieting. The world would turn out not to be amenable to such sweeping statements. But, whether the generalizations are right or wrong is not even to the point: they are meaningless since I cannot possibly begin to check them. I am reduced to taking them on faith, to accepting them through prior knowledge or prejudice, or to rejecting them just as gratuitously. Or, as I am attempting here, to discuss the very conditions which govern Professor Goodheart's discourse: his principles, his presuppositions.

This problem is not typical of Goodheart's work only, but characterizes all the "critics" he himself studies and is the hallmark or rather the failure of humanist criticism. But what is humanist criticism?

> The most impressive expression of humanist criticism occurs in nineteenth century England. The work of Carlyle, Ruskin, and Arnold has as its major theme the spiritual consequences of the new mechanical civilization and the French Revolution. It is a criticism inspired by a positive order of values, nourished by a moral understanding of the religious tradition and by a profound appreciation of the works of art and intellect of past and present, in Arnold's words, "the best that has been thought and known." Its principal expression is the essay [where one can be arbitrary with impunity for the genre does not require rigor, rules of evidence, explicitness, completeness; one can merrily pick and choose], but it may express itself as a novel or poem. (p. 8)

Yet Arnold, in his *Discourses in America* (1883-1884), responded to Thomas Henry Huxley by redefining "the best...known" to include *science*. The only problem is that Arnold and his followers never let scientific method, explicit model building and testing enter the charmed world of their critical practice. This is not to say that, as a preliminary exercise, I do not see room for unsubstantiated ideas both in literary studies and in science. But humanist critics (see for instance Cleanth Brooks in *Mosaic*, 8 [1975], 2-11) deal with ideas *only* in this way and, further, they do not like to separate—as is clear from Goodheart's last clause—the experience of literature from the study of literature. It is somehow morally wrong to study literature as an "object." Thus Goodheart's objection to Structuralism (and semiotics, and science). He does not bother to distinguish his definition of "criticism" from the one evolved among the community of poeticians and summarized in Todorov's *La Poétique* (Seuil, 1973). He prefers dealing in personalities: Barthes, Derrida, et al. Yet poetics and applied poetics (what literary semioticians would call criticism) belong to a sufficiently different world from Goodheart's brand of "criticism" for some kind of *entente cordiale* to be possible, as pointed out by Jules Brody (*French Forum*, 1 [1976], 177-184). On the other side, Jonathan Culler, in his Preface to *Structuralist Poetics*, makes a powerful case against the deluge of narrowly interpretive essays:

> Citing no special knowledge which it deems to be crucial and from which it might derive its authority, interpretative criticism seems best defended as a pedagogic tool which offers examples of intelligence for the encouragement of others. But one needs only a few such examples.... Rather than a criticism which discovers or assigns meanings [we need therefore] a poetics which strives to define the conditions of meaning (Cornell [1975], p. viii).

Naturally, the problems raised by Goodheart also correspond to the Edenically ignorant world of the *honnête homme* who (supposedly) needed nothing but a sharp mind to understand life—Arnold's "sense for conduct" and "sense for beauty." I suppose we know about beauty and conduct in the same way as we know the English language. But the speculative History of Aesthetics (to use the title of W. Tatarkiewicz's monumental study [Mouton, 1970]), for well over twenty centuries, has hardly progressed at all as compared to the infant science of experimental aesthetics (D. A. Berlyne, *Aesthetics and Psychobiology* [Appleton, 1971]). Similarly, although we know English, we cannot describe it: so why should we be able to describe the immensely more complex system of literature and its relationship to society, religion, morals—merely with the help of a few generalizations? Scientists do not have this kind of arrogance: they believe in modest but cumulative work and in the achieving of one's aims through cooperative effort. There *is* an Arrogance of [scientific] Humanism (David Ehrenfeld [Oxford, 1978]), but it is heuristic: one dares assume that solutions will be found if one admits ignorance as a starting point. Herbert and Eve Clark show, for instance, how much can be achieved in this way in their survey of *Psychology and Language* (Harcourt, 1977). I need hardly stress that scientific procedures are no panaceas. But humanist criticism is so constantly flouting rigor and the controlled use of imagination in its "model building" that the problems of scientific hypothesis and theory making or testing seem puny by comparison. Humanist criticism is not anti-empiricist and pro-rationalist as Noam Chomsky or even Claude Lévi-Strauss are. Humanist criticism is a-theoretical or anti-theoretical and its scope is too broad ever to make precise and therefore meaningful claims. (Compare with John Ellis, *The Theory of Literary Criticism: A Logical Analysis* [California, 1974], p. 97.) One experiences humanist criticism as one experiences literature: neither can or should aim at contributing directly to the slow accumulation of knowledge.

I might seem to be blind to the intelligence of Goodheart's arguments, so praised by the bookjacket comments of Wayne Booth and Geoffrey Hartman. Let me therefore give an instance of Goodheart's qualities in a comment on the *Waste Land*:

> There is, to be sure, a distinct aesthetic pleasure produced by the poem related to but not identical with its meaning. The impressions of montage, of the fusing of incongruent elements, of the striking of notes that are dissonant have a richness and excitement that run counter to the mood of despair or of disillusion which informs the poem....But one simply wills away an important aspect of the experience of the poem by denying "its bitterness and desolation." (p. 61)

The final reproach is, in a sense, well taken, but it presupposes that we can and should look at form and content not as one (see Ellis on "style" as a logically incoherent notion, pp. 158 ff.), or even as organically united, but as "things" which, moreover, can and should be separated. Second, Goodheart's categories for reading are too general and operationally vague. Presumably, he depends on a communality of intuitive knowledge and he only wishes to convince those who share his basic outlook. He would insist that the pertinent experience is "meaning," the general world-view inherent in the *Waste Land*. But meaning, even if we do not deal with irony, is a tricky (ecosystemic) notion. For instance, in Samuel Beckett's presumably also "desolate" and "disillusioning" *Waiting for Godot*, the dialogue does not owe its hypothetical uplifting character to Aesthetic qualities only, but to its being framed by a unique situation whose meaning belies a facile view of the play's content. We are faced with two human beings who are tied together by friendship or love and who share food, small sufferings and great, childhood and metaphysic thoughts; we come to feel for them and with them; we come to value their strong bond of friendship. To me, this is the kind of "positive order of values" which Goodheart seeks out (p. 8)—but which he would not (I believe) have cared to find in *Godot* because he would have treated the play as a straightforward absurdist drama. Similarly, the complex frameworks through which a poem communicates deserve serious attention: the "bitterness and desolation" must be seen as part of the total effect, not isolated from it or, independently of context, attributed to Eliot.

What is Literature?

One gets little sense, on reading Goodheart, of the diversity of contemporary critical thinking—even among humanist critics. Similarly, literature seems to mean a few great authors like Flaubert, Eliot or Joyce. Reading the eighteen selections edited with an Introduction by Paul Hernadi, on the other hand, makes me better understand my dissatisfaction with Goodheart. He lives in a universe where all the important questions received revealed answers long ago. Hernadi's book is a Book of Questions:

> Given the conflicting plurality of contemporary notions about literature in any one country, some essays will at first seem especially pertinent to some readers and quite wrongheaded to others. Perusal of the entire volume will, I hope, lead to a careful review of such initial attitudes.

> Repeated consideration of all included papers has certainly influenced my own views. (p. xvii)

René Wellek deals with "Literature"—word and concept. He shows how "in antiquity and in the Renaissance, literature or letters were understood to include all writing of quality with any pretense to permanence" (p. 20). This is a notion, oddly enough, not unlike Roland Barthes' "écriture" which, of course, Wellek castigates, along with other aspects of "French Structuralism," for its devaluing of the very concept which he himself could not but define in the same way!

E. D. Hirsch (p. 26) reminds us of Wittgenstein's notion of "family resemblances" which Charles Altieri also develops as a procedural definition:

> For terms like *literature* are terms we know how to use but not to define. We learn to apply such terms through the experience of reading certain kinds of texts, and the general term is in effect a cluster-concept that suffices when some of a wide variety of "family resemblances" are present. (p. 64)

The idea of clusters of components or features as used to define literature is, in fact, of *general* relevance to all categorization in language or cognition. As Hirsch notes, the problem is similar to the category of chair "fad[ing] off into sofas and ottomans on one side and stools on the other" (p. 25). This important argument is an implicit or explicit one in many of the selections in Hernadi's collection. It only suffers from the usual disregard for experimental evidence which, in this case, confirms and makes precise the conditions of application of the featural approach (see H. and E. Clark, pp. 464-467).

Surprisingly, however, neither Ellis's nor Todorov's books or the latter's 1973 discussion of "The Notion of Literature" (*New Literary History*, 5 [1973, 5-16] is adequately criticized or elaborated upon in this connection. Ellis's logical analysis cannot be dealt with here; Todorov distinguishes between a structural and a functional view of literature, noting that structurally literature as *one* entity cannot be said to exist. Since, in Hernadi's words, "two particular members of the 'family' [can] happen to have no single specific trait in common" (p. xii), the notion of family resemblances could avoid this kind of embarrassment for the typology of literary discourses.

Several papers, in fact, rest on the assumption that literature can be in the eye of the beholder (Hernadi, p. xxi). Norman Holland, for instance, starts with this distinction as formulated by Stanley Fish:

> "Literature is language around which we have drawn a frame, a frame that indicates a decision to regard with a peculiar self-consciousness the resources language has always possessed. What characterizes literature then is not formal properties but an attitude." (p. 207)

(If one replaces "language" by "language and nature [or society]," this will sound less like a definition of poetry and more like a definition of literature.) Holland, seeing "Literature as Transaction," insists that "*literature is not things*," or relationships between things, "*but a way to comprehend things*," or their interrelations (Holland's emphasis, p. 207). What is most pertinent, then, is our decision or capacity to transact or not to transact literarily. We will, I assume, be tempted to transact more if there are more family resemblances. Moreover, through a kind of snowball effect, we will seek out and *create* more features since it is impossible not to find a common semantic or logical trait between any two items and since, e. g., due to the small number of phonemes, language cannot but be repetitive and provide, in any text, rhymes and alliterations. As a consequence, Holland's conclusion that "*literature is transacting literarily, which is rewarded*" (his emphasis, p. 216) is too powerful. As Morse Peckham and Holland himself had pointed out in earlier books, and as avant-garde poetry has shown, *any* text can be categorized as literature and read as such. What Holland might have meant but did not like saying (it sounds too quantitative?) is that there are degrees of literariness: the more one transacts and is rewarded, the more the text is literary. Yet this is an important aspect of the definition of literature since the categories studied by Rosch and her colleagues (in Clark, pp. 527-530) possess well defined central representations understood in terms of the number of features shared (and their nature). There is therefore a model which can test and account for Hirsch's intuition that "we could all agree that [an experiment] probably could be performed successfully if, for instance, the pairs of examples always consisted of poems by Keats, technical reports from *Science* magazine [etc.]" (pp. 24-25). The irony of Hirsch's position—and of the humanist's in general—is that though he has not "troubled to perform" the experiment, it would certainly be worth performing since it would provide a piece of information somewhat distanced from the critic's preconceived notions of what is obvious or not. Literary studies could then begin to be cooperative, cumulative, less individualistic and more humane in their search for understanding through knowledge. Speculation would not constitute the whole of literary studies: it would have more importance in applied poetics (criticism) than in poetics where it would only be, as in the other sciences, part of the preliminary work (see F. S. C. Northrop, *The Logic of the Sciences and the Humanities* [Macmillan, 1947], or Ellis's view of the cycle of inquiry, pp. 195 ff.).

Todorov's functional-structural perspective contains an insight which must still be considered here: one can establish two typologies closely paralleling each other. This accounts for the fact that we notice systematic structural similarities between literary (a lyric) and non-literary forms of discourse (a ritual, a prayer), or that Michelet's historical studies can easily be read as historical novels. Robert Scholes insists on this aspect in Hernadi's book when he reminds us that the Prague School and especially Roman Jakobson were interested in the notion of *literariness in language* rather than in *literature* (p. 233). The concept of family resemblances, then, functions on two axes: horizontally, within each one of the parallel typologies and, vertically, between non-literary and literary forms of discourse. If we accept the pertinence of this bi-axial viewpoint, it is clear that several of Hernadi's collaborators are not defining literature (the first axis) but aspects of literariness (both axes). Literariness will be found in literary or non-literary texts and, conversely, some features of it will sometimes be found elsewhere yet not in some literary texts. The functional-structural problem involved in a definition of literariness, however, is identical to the one involved in the definition of literature (see Ellis). I can, therefore, only point to some of the aspects of literariness which have preoccupied the contributors. Hirsch tends to identify literariness with "humane education" (p. 34) and seems close to Arnold's or Goodheart's position; Morse Peckham and Monroe Beardsley as well as Robert Scholes seem interested in the notion of fictionality as it relates to literariness; Robert Brown and Martin Steinman insist rightly on genre rules and speech acts; Charles Altieri also mentions the importance of the situational context of communication. Altieri notes, for example, that

> we tend to define literature as discourse where implicit meanings predominate since the utterances are freed from normal illocutionary work and thus invite us simply to contemplate the complexities of the experience presented. (p. 68)

One could also mention the contributions of such well-known scholars as James Wimsatt or Murray Krieger, but I prefer to conclude on Richard Ohmann's attempt at discovering how novels become best-sellers—that is his defining literature in its social context.

In short, Hernadi's collection is too rich and diverse for a detailed review. It certainly is the best collection on the topic and, read in conjunction with Ellis's and Todorov's books, its qualities stand out along with its insufficiencies: though broad, its scope is not wide enough since certain contemporary trends are only marginally represented (literary semiotics); it is speculative, never quantitative and experimental; the social aspect is represented only by Ohmann's very special viewpoint. But such failures are inevitable in a relatively short book written by literary critics. For if Hernadi's co-workers have tried to take into account Arnold's "best . . . known," and have opened up their inquiries to philosophical, linguistic, semiotic, sociological, and psychoanalytic perspectives, they are essentially not, themselves, practitioners of the social sciences, but humanists using them. This is a giant step beyond Goodheart's practice, but it leaves literary studies (poetics) in the absurd position of being an eternal borrower, of extrapolating, rather than being a discipline which imaginatively plans its own experiments. Like psychology, for instance, literary studies can and should not only be clinical (case studies are homologous to criticism) and rationalist (speculative), but empirical; it needs to take into direct account its interdisciplinary nature, operationalize its models and test them—not let other social scientists do it for them. As Northrop and Ellis show, there are not two cultures, but two stages of inquiry. Why should humanists be so eager to stop at the first stage?

Like the scientific study of the human body then (Todorov, p. 22), literary studies cannot but be a confluence of disciplines: first, erudition (establishing texts or bibliographies); second, poetics, which is a branch of each one of the social sciences (psychopoetics, sociopoetics, literary history, etc.); third, applied poetics, or criticism I, which is of pedagogical value and of importance as a means of testing out working models of the literary process; and fourth, for a general audience or for different categories of students, the essay-like, Arnoldian criticism II. Erudition and criticism II have dominated the study of literature too exclusively (see Culler's remarks above); they should be understood as belonging to a wider framework. Clearly, as Colin Martindale suggests, it is high time to *also* "sit with statisticians and commit a social science" (*Poetics*, 7 [1978], 273-282).

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The Sceptical Vision of Molière by Robert McBride. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1977. Pp. xii + 250. $19.50.

Woman Triumphant: Feminism in French Literature 1610-1652 by Ian Maclean. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977. Pp. xv + 314. $27.50.

Robert McBride intended his study, *The Sceptical Vision of Molière*, to deal in a balanced way with both the playwright's philosophical world-view and his comedies. We begin with the contention that Molière's thought is profoundly paradoxical—the book's subtitle is *A Study in Paradox*—and expresses itself in the tense interplay between mutually incompatible elements giving the total *oeuvre* its highly idiosyncratic dramatic texture. It is further suggested that this "double-minded state" in Molière's work offers readers an effective entry into a critical evaluation of the comedies, providing as it does a grasp of the artist's mind and his art, the primal and the intellectual, thinking-theatre and fun-theatre.

Starting with the lesser plays before 1664, the author traces an evolution in Molière's thinking from a guileless perception of the illusory nature of appearances in the early 1660's (*Sganarelle* and *Dom Garcie de Navarre*), to a deeply sceptical *vision du monde* by the time of the "problem plays" around 1665 (*Tartuffe, Dom Juan, Le Misanthrope*). This philosophical stance is confirmed in later plays and is particularly manifest in the necessity Molière's characters feel for role-playing and manipulating *être* and *paraître*. Interacting in endless parodoxical situations in which reason is often made to stand on its own head, the comic characters fall into three groups: the Fools (Arnolphe, Orgon, Alceste) who assume they are more reasonable than anyone else and accordingly dream naively of adjusting the world around their fixations; the Knaves (Tartuffe, Don Juan, Trissotin, the Doctors), inveterate players trying constantly to dupe others but who are done in at the end by their exaggerated self-confidence; the Wise Fools (Ariste, Chrysalde, Cléante, Philinte, Sganarelle, Sosie) who occupy the supreme vantage point overlooking the entire comic scene and who survived intact by being the most lucid about the schemes of the Fools and the tricks of the Knaves. In terms of dramatic structure, the Fools provide the original comic impetus by their fantastic pipe-dreams, the Knaves sustain the comic action by their connivance, and it is invariably the Wise Fools who implicitly or otherwise draw the moral of the story, usually to the effect that "since reason is an impossible absurdity, it is better to participate in the comedy of social life" (p. 215).

It is in the elaboration of this point of view that problems begin, especially in the two long chapters on *Tartuffe* and *Le Misanthrope*. Beginning with the first *Tartuffe* in 1644, for example, we are to believe that Molière was seized by a "constant preoccupation . . . with the reality of evil in the form of concerted hypocrisy" (p. 45), and a realization that comedy in its traditional form is powerless against "irreducible moral evil" (p. 46). According to McBride, the crisis brought on by this meditation on evil linked Molière to the sceptical thought of the then well-known philosopher, La Mothe Le Vayer, and the two "friends" (proof?) shared a religious sentiment defined as "humanist *libertin érudit*," a familiar idea in Molière studies advanced in the past by such critics as Sells, Jasinski, Cairncross, Adam, Calvet and others. Familiar too are certain key ideas on *Le Misanthrope* such as the notion that "the relative nature of man and life" (p. 118) wins out over absolute and universal values, and the position that Philinte is the true hero of this play because, wise fool, he alone knows one must play a role in order to balance one's nature in the complexities of the world. Other characters like Sganarelle of *Dom Juan* and Sosie of *Amphritryon* also tend to be seen as the primary heroes and the fact that many of these characters who bear so much of the intelligence of the play are either naive (Sganarelle, Sosie) or bores (Philinte, Chrysalde, Cléante) seems not at all to bother McBride. Many readers of Molière may also remain unconvinced by a method which groups in the same category such diverse characters as Cléante, Philinte, Sganarelle and Sosie, or Tartuffe, Don Juan and Trissotin, or Arnolphe and Alceste. One could also wonder about a study that makes more of marginal works such as *Sganarelle* and *Dom Garcie de Navarre* than of *L'Ecole des femmes* and *L'Avare*. There is a lot in this book that suggests the victory of method over common sense, which is especially disappointing because the author is clearly an astute critic who worked hard to be convincing and helpful and to avoid the shop-worn commonplaces in Molière criticism.

But any honest book is more than merely the sum of its contestable parts and McBride has some excellent insights as well. Particularly noteworthy are the idea of Sganarelle as the "ironic and burlesque spectator of the master" in *Dom Juan* (p. 92), the expanded treatment of religious attitudes during the time of the three versions of *Tartuffe* (pp. 60 ff.), the philosophical implications suggested by the ironic mirroring effects in the chapter on *Amphitryon*, the notion of the *folle sagesse* ("folly of reason and reason of folly") as it operates in Orgon (p. 59) and *les femmes savantes* (p. 191). Good perceptions too on the infinite complexities of molièresque comedy although too often "the reason of comedy...coincides with the reason of Le Vayer." Unfortunately the overly systematic method delving consistently into seventeenth century philosophical and religious issues will exclude the general reader from this book and it is he who might have profited most from it. The specialists, alas, may be disappointed.

Ian Maclean's *Woman Triumphant* is a detailed account of the first stirrings of feminism in French writing and iconography, roughly from the Renaissance to the mid-seventeenth century. The *querelle des femmes* in the early years of the century did little to alter entrenched ideas and attitudes toward women. The most interesting period is 1630-50 and the book deals in considerable detail with such authors as Jacques Du Bosc, Pierre Le Moyne and François Grenaille. At the mid-century the *précieuses* in their salons helped to promote the acceptance of education for privileged women with unlimited leisure time and gradually, through the taste and sensibilities of this group, there emerges in pastoral novels like *L'Astrée* "a feminine universe built around feminine sensibility and subservient to feminine discipline" (p. 171). Maclean argues further that the very nature of the traditional, paradoxical attitude toward women—angelic/demonic, beautiful/ugly, pure/unclean, etc.—lent itself to the baroque imagination in the literary and visual arts but after two chapters the author can only conclude timorously that the unending mannerisms of the baroque make it difficult to determine the style's actual contribution to feminist thinking. Finally then, the promises implicit in the book's title are unfulfilled. This is an uneventful period, barely a cautious testing of the waters with no real progress in feminist matters. "French literature" is only cursorily discussed in favor of endless tracts and minor moralist writings. And to call woman in France in the early seventeenth century "triumphant" is cruelly ironic, especially when one recalls that universal suffrage came to "la douce France" only in 1946.

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The Subterfuge of Art: Language and the Romantic Tradition by Michael Ragussis. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978. Pp. xii + 243. $14.50.

In *The Subterfuge of Art* Michael Ragussis sets out to combat the canard that literature is wish-fulfillment. Taking texts by Wordsworth, Keats, Yeats, Forster, and Lawrence, he demonstrates that they criticize the archaic desires they recapture and represent. "The work of art is the labor of self-education," its end a confrontation with recalcitrant reality. The strongest art is that which unmasks its own comforting promises: "the work of art has the power to engage us in the magic of illusion, and thereby use its power of subterfuge, only to turn on itself critically and in this moment to show how it is one step ahead of us. It shows how we as readers are its dupe, in need of art to teach us the consequences of daydreaming: art contains within itself a warning against some of its most potent powers." By careful close readings Ragussis illuminates the self-critical techniques developed by his authors, the styles that attain "the dialectic of speech, of dialogue really." To call Ragussis' subtle commentary "close reading," however, is to make his accomplishment appear less than it is. Yeats's "Her Vision in the Wood" is placed in a framework that draws on Nietzsche, Sir James Frazer, and Jane Harrison, and the discussion of the possibilities of knowledge in *A Passage to India* gains by its context of Plato, Bacon, and Einstein. The consideration Ragussis gives to the connection between ellipsis and the themes of vacancy and vision in that novel is perhaps the best illustration of the ease with which he moves between meticulous stylistic analysis to the broader issues of his title.

How any reader judges the success of *The Subterfuge of Art* as a whole is likely to depend on how strictly he demands that the expectations aroused by the subtitle, "Language and the Romantic Tradition," be met. Whether there exists anything so continuous, self-conscious, and unique in the relationship among these authors as to warrant isolating as a "tradition" is a question Ragussis explores insufficiently. The criteria for inclusion or exclusion are scarcely stated: Byron's *Don Juan*, for instance, would seem useful to any study of Romantic poetry's instructive exposure of its own fictions. Other works will occur to other readers; each would complicate our sense of "the romantic tradition."

Indeed *The Subterfuge of Art* is unified not by its establishment of an historical tradition, but by the consistency of its own critical method, a different but not necessarily lesser thing. It unfolds under the double aegis of Lawrence and Freud, or, to put it more faithfully to Ragussis' practice, of Lawrence, and Freud as seen through Lawrence. The chief rubric is from Lawrence: "One sheds one's sickness in books, repeats and presents again one's emotions to be master of them." Ragussis continues: "Lawrence in fact imagines this curative process to be like the 'talking cure' of psychoanalysis, which posits as a cure the coming into full consciousness . . . of one's deepest emotions and thoughts. Freud and Lawrence even use the same term—'verbal consciousness'—to describe this process." The Freud of this description, however, is the Freud of the earliest days of psychoanalysis, not the persevering investigator who traced the protean tenacity of the resistances until he became less sanguine about the notion of cure.

The partial view of psychoanalysis as a "talking cure" bears directly on Ragussis' approach. Throughout the study the word is potentially The Word, if with diminshed confidence as the century progresses, and the artist a privileged figure, a truth-teller whose "mastery" is not brought under scrutiny. Ragussis concludes a fine essay on "The Eve of St. Agnes" by praising Keats's "uncompromising truthfulness" in renouncing the romance he elaborates: the significance of Keats's career-long repetition of this pattern, or of the maleficent aspects of women in his work, interests him less. Similarly, Yeats's program of impersonal poetry is characterized almost at face value, rather than as a strategy itself susceptible to analysis. The concentration on "verbal consciousness" also narrows the chapter on Lawrence: an examination of key terms in *Women in Love* almost apart from the passions that drive the plot risks fussiness. Ragussis depicts Wordsworth in a fashion that minimizes the anxieties that give him force. He reveals the import of the generally ignored mythological allusions in the Arab Dream in Book V of *The Prelude*, but his reading of the episode as a parable of salvation remains unconvincing. He does not comment on Wordsworth's declaration that he awakened from the dream "in terror," nor on the tensions *The Prelude* manifests between his desire to believe that love of nature leads to love of man and such apocalyptic temptations as the Arab presents. Wordsworth is a more troubled writer than Ragussis shows, one perhaps threatened most of all by his own "solutions," the very "cure" Ragussis affirms.

The Subterfuge of Art might have been more searching had Ragussis tested more strenuously the ideas of tradition and of "verbal consciousness" which inform it. Nonetheless, each separate study is enriching, and amplified by comparisons developed as the book advances. Its range is impressive, and its writing lucid. In focussing on the powers accorded language Ragussis has raised queries central to literary criticism, and developed them with suppleness.

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Dickens and Phiz by Michael Steig. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1978. Pp. x + 340. $12.50.

Dickens and Charity by Norris Pope. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978. Pp. xi + 303. $15.00.

Here are two new books of interest, each illuminating a part of the periphery of the great achievement of Dickens' fiction, both suggesting that light at the edge reaches to the heart of the achievement. Neither quite succeeds at that, though Mr. Steig's ray reaches a bit farther, I think, than Mr. Pope's.

Both books stake rather modest claims to our attention not for startling originality but for synthesizing or extending arguments about, or approaches to, Dickens with which we are generally familiar. Thus Michael Steig's book on Dickens and Phiz acknowledges and continues the work of John Harvey and Robert Patten in demonstrating the relationship, mutually creative, of illustrator and author. And Norris Pope's invocation and exploration of the actual world of Victorian religious and socio-political philanthropy behind Dickens' fictional portrayal of that world, slightly misnamed *Dickens and Charity*, proceeds as he says from Philip Collins' models, *Dickens and Crime*, and *Dickens and Education*.

Steig's book, at once irresistible and aggravating, is one of those texts you need three hands and two minds to read. Its bouquet of 126 illustrations, gathered towards the end of the book, requires to be sifted through twice: once piece by piece while triangulating Steig's argument about Phiz's emblematic contribution with Dickens' text and Phiz's illustrations; a second time following the technical and creative development of the illustrator himself, with the help of illustrated "quotations" supplied from Hogarth and Cruikshank and from Phiz's non-Dickensian work.

On this latter point, Steig gives a poignant account of an able craftsman, Hablot Knight Browne, catapulted by the suicide of a fellow craftsman, Robert Seymour, into sudden relationship with the premier imagination of the age, whose first novel, *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, changed in the very doing from an almost random assembly of incidents and characters into a system, and then into a living fictional world. As the writer's imagination took hold in this way, so did the illustrator's, as Patten's work, and now Steig's, shows.

Browne's work we see, like Dickens', perfected during the 1840's and early 50's a world crowded with emblematic significance, and then shifted, through greater attention to the non-caricatural differentiation of characters and to the fundamentals of light, perspective, and surface design, to still more powerful evocations of psychological mood and meaning. Browne was the only illustrator to realize more than one of Dickens' novels all the way through; he worked with the novelist during the most productive years of his life, and it is difficult to escape the impression, chaste as Steig wants to be about this, that the severing of relationship with that impatient and contradictory genius, after excellent work for *Little Dorrit* (1856-58) and a considerable falling off in *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), contributed to the unhappy conclusion of Browne's career in a decade of hackwork, the man "gradually deteriorating as an artist" (p. 312) even before an illness in 1867 partly paralyzed his hand and led to a final decade of often "pitiable" (p. 314) work.

It is, Steig says, no longer a "brand-new idea" that the illustrated novel is in some important respects an independent subgenre, but *Dickens and Phiz* does excellent service in showing as well as telling us how this is so. Two points stand especially well demonstrated here: the importance of consistent visual characterization and visual reinforcement of theme in establishing continuity over the original 18 to 20 months of a novel's parts publication, and the subtle, probably intuitive and unspoken assignment of much of the heaviest moral commentary of the novel to the realm of emblematic visual detail, away from the riskier field of authorial rhetoric.

In both these senses, Steig argues provocatively that the illustrator often goes somewhat beyond either the spoken instructions of Dickens or the surface allowance of the text being illustrated, to emphasize figures and problems that might otherwise remain hidden in Dickens' crowded world. One convincing example is Phiz's Quilp, the dwarf-menace of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, whose physical, and as Phiz draws him, sexual, potency gives him a statistical (16 cuts–close to half the total number of drawings for the considerably longer novels in monthly parts" [p. 57]) and hence psychic dominance which he does not have in the text. Thanks to these and other illustrations which portray with little emblematic criticism the "unruly energies" of the novel's lords of misrule, Steig argues, *The Old Curiosity Shop* is "dominated by these energies rather than by the idealizing and religious sentiments which Dickens himself evidently wished to consider the main thrust of the work" (p. 57).

On the other hand, the extra spaces of the illustrations allow for a multiplication of the moralizing commentary, cooled off, in a McLuhanesque sense, from the narration to the picture, which is right at the surface of the text. Thus the thundering denunciations of *Bleak House*, the despairs and the luminous hopes of *Little Dorrit*, are continued, safely, and even expanded in the illustrations' powerful images of piercing light and encroaching shadow, of sharply-angled tentative support and coming collapse, images which "sometimes convey meanings which might be maudlin or too glaring if included in the text itself" (p. 157).

Emblem-hunting with Steig is a fine art, and an exciting enterprise as well. Holmesian magnifying glass in hand we discover, for instance, that Murdstone himself is staring at David Copperfield and his mother in "Our Pew at Church," holding his prayerbook open, like the drowsy maiden in Hogarth's "The Sleeping Congregation" whom Steig thinks Phiz is drawing upon here, at the marriage service–"in one of the steels the letters 'MARR' are clearly discernible" (p. 115). Murdstone was not mentioned by David in the moment being illustrated: this leads Steig to suggest an elegant complication of repressions in both the child and the adult David's memory of Murdstone, very satisfying as criticism.

Even a microscope doesn't help much with some of the astonishingly evocative figures to which we are led in Steig's book, however, especially in the almost Boschian world of the Covers. What, for instance, to make of the fox which confronts Esther "in a supplicatory or anticipatory posture" (p. 314) on the Cover of *Bleak House*, or the coin into which the man "born in misery-dying in obscurity" seems fading in the Cover of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, suggesting, in ambiguous final detail, that those are coins which were his eyes?

Following Phiz through *Dombey and Son* and *David Copperfield*, novels crucial to certain turns and consolidations in Dickens' vision, Steig sees something at variance with the apparent themes of the text, and proposes an important emendation to our understanding. Of *Dombey* he notices that despite the explicit themes of pride, money, and power, of predatory men and victimized women, despite the dominating textual and visual presence of children and the apparent relegation of women to parental and service roles, the illustrations themselves, powerfully enlarging the presence of Mrs. Pipchin, Susan Nipper, Mrs. Skewton, and above all, Edith Dombey and Alice Marwood, "bring out strikingly that *Dombey and Son* is populated by a large number of monstrous or dangerous women and that sexual hatred and frustration lurk not far below the surface" (p. 92). The text unmistakably identifies with the overpowered and fallen women (or, one may argue, desperately flees from identification with the overpowering and destroying male). But Phiz's imagination, Steig shows, seems less afraid of the paradoxes of sexual conflict, and emblem after emblem in the plates, Medusas, chastizers, amazons, suggest that in the ferocity of that conflict, driven to the wall, woman is at least a match for man.

Turning in that light to *David Copperfield*, Steig notices that the illustrations continue to emphasize the "fallen-woman topos" despite the drive of the text to establish the gentle and thoughtful Agnes Wickfield as the dominant female force in David's life. Here the emblematic imagination of Phiz seems to be following the almost conscious choice of subjects by Dickens: only half a dozen plates include or refer to Agnes, ten to the thoughtless but somehow spellbinding Dora, and twelve to the fallen and tragic Emily, an indication perhaps of the intense hold these darker obsessions still have on David's unconscious.

Steig's arguments send us, as he says, back to the texts, with renewed interest, with some preconceptions challenged or removed. He offers us a way to change or refine our understanding of things at the heart of Dickens' achievement. Norris Pope asks an intriguing question which promises such renewal too; but the terms of his study preclude, I think, his carrying his argument to the heart.

The question in *Dickens and Charity* is: given that Dickens actually knows a great deal about the genuine contributions of Evangelicals and evangelical feeling to the public weal, given that he felt equally strongly about the Nonconformist, Roman Catholic, or Anglican contributions to religious humbuggery, why is the picture of organized religion and religious philanthropy that emerges from the novels almost exclusively Evangelical, and almost entirely negative? Pope's book surveys Dickens' complex involvement in, and his wide-ranging understanding of the contributions of religious feeling to domestic and foreign missions, the Sanitary movement, the Ragged School and Anti-Sabbatarian conflicts, Victorian reformisms of all kinds, and succeeds wonderfully in establishing those "givens," in showing us what he knew as an engaged thinker and editor. But there is, Pope remarks at the start, "sometimes a sizeable gap between what he knew and what he wrote in his novels" (p. ix), and the book describes that gap without fully explaining it.

We can see at once a few explanations for the dynamic presence of Evangelical hypocritical philanthropy in the novels, and for the "suppression and omission of surrounding detail" from them (p. 198) which would favor the Evangelical attitude, or balance the picture by recording with equal power the flaws of other religions. Dickens, like most social liberals of this time, saw environmental forces at work causing poverty, disease, and crime, and favored centralizing and interventionalist public policies to encounter them: Nonconformism located the cause of public distress essentially in the sinful private heart, and feared losing its hard-won autonomy to centralized bureaucracies. Dickens strongly disapproved of "religious exclusiveness" (p. 113) and recoiled from the "austere and wrathful" tone of religions like that of the Murdstones or the Clennams, both of which tendencies he traced to the Dissenting attempt to recover the spirit and the role and the chosenness of the Old Testament, while underrating the New Testament which Dickens thought "a sufficient guide in itself." Added to these reasons for making his fictional portrait of "godly philanthropy" less humane, less complex, even less successful, than he knew it to be, is surely the overwhelming appeal of Evangelical rhetoric, outclassing any other religious language as an instrument, whether for a preacher or a satirist. And finally, as Pope notes, a professional opposition to the anti-fiction propaganda of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Methodism certainly contributed to Dickens' uncharitable, but effective and in their way profound, analyses of selfishness operating under the mask of selfless charity in the portraits of Stiggins, Chadband, Honeythunder, Mrs. Pardiggle, Mrs. Jellybe and company.

But a deeper analysis, not just of philanthropy but of *charity* and Dickens, would require more subtle treatment of such conundrums as Pecksniff and his daughters Charity and Mercy, or of Harold Skimpole, or of Dickens' use of such profoundly New Testament figures of charity as the Magdalene. This kind of treatment is outside the boundaries of Pope's study. Welcome as it is in its illumination of the "real" Victorian world of charities, it stops short of exploring the "complex set of feelings" (p. x) which allowed Dickens to support "charity," of course, and yet to create a fictional world where it seemed almost impossible, morally, to do or to accept charity.

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Nikolai Leskov: The Man and His Art by Hugh McLean. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1977. Pp. xvi + 780. $30.00.

The Russian writer N. S. Leskov (1831-1895) stood in need of a good, intelligent, objective (i. e., not politically biased) modern monograph. Innumerable books have been produced on his contemporaries in Russian literature (Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov), but Leskov has been waiting too long for an adequate extensive study. In Russia the huge biography by his son, Andrey Leskov, was published posthumously in 1954 after many peripeteia. Since then, at least five monographs have appeared in Russian, none of them comprehensive or of outstanding scholarly quality. In the United States, some noted slavists wrote on Leskov (V. Setschkareff, W. Edgerton), but only now a work has appeared to which the hackneyed praise is fully applicable that it will remain for many years to come the definitive word on Leskov.

In 640 pages the author, Professor of Slavic languages and literatures and Dean of Humanities at the University of California, Berkeley, presents a chronological survey of the traditional "Life and Works" type in four parts with a wealth of information, illuminating insights into Leskov's psychology and analyses of all his writings. There is an extensive apparatus of notes—often interesting reading in themselves—and a list of Leskov's fiction. Instead of a bibliography, which we actually would expect in a work of this size and stature, there is only a four-page bibliographical note in which the main Leskov studies are mentioned.

The psychoanalytical deliberations in the first chapter are not always fully convincing, and some of the stories are quoted without mentioning titles or dates (but in the later chapters the writings are always identified and discussed in close conjunction with the progression of his biography). Gradually the book acquires more depth and becomes more absorbing. We are impressed by the objective spirit in which McLean conducts his investigation of Leskov's motives and inspirations, his frustrations and "paranoid tendencies" (p. 84). There are revealing discussions of Leskov's large body of prose works, of his only play, and of his non-fictional output as well, mostly from the "psychobiographical" (p. 112), but also from a socio-historical point of view. This is not a monument of praise, for McLean is realistic enough to recognize Leskov's shortcomings as a writer, his unappealing sides as a human being.

At the same time McLean is, of course, fully appreciative of Leskov's gifts as a writer. Leskov has earned his special place in Russian literature and his popularity among Russian readers thanks to his sparkling narrative talent, which he mostly displayed in short stories, or in longer, mosaic-like prose works that lack strong, unifying, rectilinear plots. His favorite form was the frame story and the *skaz*, in which the author cedes his narrative role to a person who tells the story in his or her own colorful style and vocabulary. McLean often refers to the *skaz*-element in Leskov (and describes it with particularly apt image on p. 155), but there is no extensive, in-depth discussion of his *skaz* and frame story technique. From a formal point of view the book could have been more elaborate.

The author endeavors to treat each of Leskov's writings with equal attention, with the result that some of his masterpieces are analyzed less elaborately than they deserve, whereas relatively much room is given to less valuable or even inferior works. *The Cathedral Folk* (even though McLean cautiously remarks that "we may even concede that this novel does not quite rank among Leskov's very best works," (p. 192), has a central place in his oeuvre and is considered one of his masterpieces; yet only a chapter of fifteen pages is devoted to it. The next chapter is almost as long, but deals only with some very minor writings. McLean disposes of the bulky novel *At Daggers Drawn* in less than two pages, in generally disapproving terms. It is true, it has been loathed by contemparary critics, but for purely political reasons; Dostoyevsky and Gorky praised it highly, especially for the heroine Vanskok.

Among the many topics treated in this book with good sense and poise I might single out the theme of Leskov and the German problem; the "righteous men," i.e., the positive characters he attempted for a long period to develop (the author makes the valid point that these types are static and do not grow to win sainthood, p. 458); his approach to the Jewish question (although it may be somewhat of an overstatement, McLean points out that Leskov in the eighties changed "from a literary trafficker in anti-Semitic anecdotes into an outspoken defender of the Jews," p. 425); and his relation to Tolstoy, to which the fourth part of his work is devoted.

Real errors seem to be absent from this book, which is evidently the fruit of many years of scrupulous, intensive labor. One can put a few question marks. When he assesses *The Islanders* as "the nadir of Leskov's entire career as a writer" (p. 161), one wonders whether the same could not be claimed of his anti-nihilistic novels, his anti-Jewish stories. A contradiction seems to exist between McLean's opinion that Leskov "paints a stark and gloomy picture" of the Russian Orthodox Church in *The Cathedral Folk* (p. 198) and his statement that the early seventies were "the period when Leskov regarded the Orthodox church as a potential force of moral progress and enlightenment" (p. 239). Is it completely true that Leskov around 1880 had actually "abandoned Orthodoxy for Protestantism" (p. 347)? Finally, it seems not quite correct to describe the Pole Syrokomla as "a minor poet, now little remembered" (p. 657): his works continue to be reissued and studies on him continue to appear.

The final question arises: does this big book on Leskov prove and convince the reader that he was a great writer—greater than his reputation (especially outside of Russia) has been up to now? In the opinion of this reviewer, many or most of his writings of the late seventies, eighties and nineties, all those "Bishop's Rounds," "Debauchers," "Co-Functionaries," "Ancient Psychopaths" and whatever other strange titles Leskov gave them—stories of which McLean dutifully relates the contents and points to the ideology they disclose, without much discussion of their intrinsic literary value—all fail to reach the level of some of the famous earlier works and will hardly contribute to making Leskov's name a household word among lovers of good literature, to his being ranked alongside Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevsky, as McLean hopes in his Preface. Leskov is the author of a small number of exquisite literary works; McLean reveals new aspects of these gems and draws attention to and rehabilitates a few lesser known stories (like "At the Edge of the World," "The Little Things in a Bishop's Life," "Pechersk Antics"). However, a large number of second rate writings cannot be saved by McLean's interpretation from remaining second rate; and saving them is not what he tries to do—which is one of the appealing qualities of this magnificent book.

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Always Merry and Bright: The Life of Henry Miller, "An Unauthorized Biography" by Jay Martin. Santa Barbara, Ca.: Capra Press, 1978 and London: Sheldon Press, 1979. Pp. xvi + 560; 61 photographs. $15.00.

The title page disclaimer—"An Unauthorized Biography"—of this first full-scale life of Henry Miller might be a bit misleading. Miller, usually indignant at critics and scholars for not taking him at his own inflated valuation, may have required some such gesture of dissociation. However, the subject provided this biographer with interviews and access to a vast quantity of letters and manuscript material. In pursuing these, and other oral and written sources, Jay Martin showed the impressive dedication and energy which were also evident in his biography of Nathanael West. And in spite of having to present much negative evidence about Miller's behavior and writings—inevitable for any informed and even mildly candid discussion—this semi-authorized biograghy is sympathetic to, and sometimes defensive of, Miller. However, the tone is often confused and the intentionality of the thick ironies not always clear. For example, the title, *Always Merry and Bright*, earnestly repeats a favorite self-solacing rhetorical gesture of Miller's, though of course it was partly posturing by an often self-pitying, anxious, resentful, aggrandizing, narcissistic, depressive literary clown.

Martin's writing has been much infected by several of Miller's styles. The contagion brought out some trite burbling, melodramatic chapter organization, colloquial breeziness, and pompous sentimentality. Yet I think the work is better than the worst Millerian mannerisms would suggest. Granted, reaching the utilities in this biography takes some tolerance, whether for the biographer's introductory claim that he "wanted to create a style which could drive . . . into the chambers of his heart" or for his concluding assertion about Miller that the "stains on his soul turned into star-like gems." The bathetic sentiments and the hardnosed documentation combine in a rather uncertain mixture of intimate pedantry about what Miller ate, read, drank, jotted down, seduced, etc., and would-be novelistic pretenses at what he was thinking and feeling. Martin even imagines a lengthy speech to himself which Miller should have made ("if only he had said"). But the dubiousness of much of this is countered by harsh reportage, in spite of Martin's bland tactfulness about such matters as Miller's sexual peculiarity (as in his years of pimping), his insistent lying (protection for his exhibitionist candor), and his endless exploitation of people (the con-man, of course, was also often conned). While a loving heart is presented as Miller's great quality, with unintentional humor, much evidence is also given of his heartlessness. No doubt he babbled so much about "love" and "wisdom of the heart" because of their absence, an absence which was the source of his rich rhetoric and revelations. The "star-like gems" can readily be re-seen as "stains," as they should be, for they were the one stock for art of this writing rogue.

Martin, of course, quite lacks Miller's talent of burlesque comic rhetoric and his one grace of exploiting it. But the scholar is knowledgeable enough to have acquired from what he considers the more "cynical" (i. e., the critical and disinterested) a sense of some of the Millerian poses. Surely Miller's main project was "the myth of himself" in which "he wanted to be known as a writer much more than to write." He longed for the literary life to redeem the confused and messy and degrading personal existence. Righteously bumptious posturing as Creative Artist, Genius, Romantic Lover, Seer, Sage, etc., eventually found the appropriate large audience of enviously naive aspirants to similar roles. While most of this lacks artistic and intellectual value, it may well be of some interest for cultural pathology, a pathetic-buffoonish monumentalizing of the egotism of art. It might also be useful for study of the schizophrenic American religiosity about "creativity," though Martin has little sense of such social realities.

Miller's fractured sensibility found its justification in logorrheic role-playing. Within that wordy and egotistic wash was a small stream of interesting writings: *Tropic of Cancer* (his only successful book-length work), a handful of sketches of marginal life (such as "Max," "Mademoiselle Claude," "Astrological Fricassée," "The Staff of Life," "Reunion in Brooklyn," "A Devil in Paradise"), and a scattering of curious titles, odd bits, rhetorical flourishes. The larger part of Miller's writing—memoirs, literary essays, polemics, travel pieces, plays, etc.—resulted in a hardly coherent flow of confessional obsession and fragmented arty silliness dominated, as Martin sometimes acknowledges, by the "defensive and egotistical." The incongruities in Miller helped produce some lively burlesque comedy, but the larger unintentional comedy of the vain work and life is mostly pathetic and fatuous.

As a subject, then, the Miller material requires emphatic discrimination. Martin's biography is informative on some of the backgrounds of Miller's writings, such as that he exaggerated his nastiness in *Tropic of Cancer* to temporarily create several of his more successful roles—the insouciant rascally down-and-outer and the outrageous American innocent abroad. But for the most part, the biographer is thin and uninsightful on Miller and his writings, his roles and his society. Martin's lack of discrimination also results in wearisome long reports on publishing trivia, Miller's dreams (from manuscript material), and his money problems. The biographer's unanalytic reporting on Saint Henry's boozy occultism, faith in astrology, and other unintentionally burlesque religiosity, is charitably empty. To treat this material earnestly, as with Miller's other muddled and fractured intellectual pretenses, reads as rather bad pedantic joking.

Martin's biography is somewhat better, though hardly probing, in recognizing that Miller was sexually "maimed" by his repressive lower-middle-class mother and his ineffective father. This led to a quasi-erotic love of "buddies," which dominated much of his life as well as writing, and to the degrading treatment of women as "sacred" yet "sluttish." There is considerable pathos in the obsessionally "naughty" little boy who became the sexually garrulous and promiscuous dirty old man. Yet the lack of most of what is thought of as superego (from the father) gave Miller much of his rascally charm and his exceptional, and verbally responsive, candor about the obscene and other amorality. The commonplace view may be right that Miller (though only in his early writings) liberated not only his own obscenity and petit bourgeois character from destructive repression but in doing so opened some significant literary possibilities and probably contributed to a more general opening up of sensibility.

But the super-egoless liberation also resulted in an egomania that produced hundreds of pages of silly pontificating, the self-parody into pornography in

Sextus, and much other bad writing. While Martin handles some of this rather gingerly, he does document Miller's fragmented sensibility and intellectual muddle and long decline into the literary role he had so yearned after. Much of this could poignantly illustrate Goethe's warning about achieving youthful fantasies of eroticism, glory and imperious self-image. The *Tropic of Cancer* period provided the geography of Miller's personal and literary achievement, the exuberant land of art-defiance and escape from a demeaning family-Brooklyn, alienating America and fractured self. But most of what was left to come was autobiographical repetition and self-parody, with no place to go, little purpose, and not much redeeming style. Even sympathetic Jay Martin grants now and again that most of Miller's later writings, and character of parochial self-centering, didn't amount to much—"Maybe his mind . . . had worn smooth." The biography, with no larger purpose or understanding than hyped-up chronicling, also wears thin. Subject and object become a rather empty literary vaudeville.

While much is stylistically and intellectually weak in Martin's biography, it is not worse than many of the learned books on Miller. Reviewing those (since my survey of the earlier studies in my *Henry Miller*, 1963), one must be struck by their lack of intelligent discrimination, as with William Gordon's pretentious and foolish study of Miller's "romantic aesthetic" in *The Mind and Art of Henry Miller* (1967), Jane A. Nelson's slightly better and earnestly literal-minded Jungianism in *Form and Image in the Fiction of Henry Miller* (1970), and Bertrand Mathieu's mostly irrelevant mystical and Rimbaud analogizing in *Orpheus in Brooklyn* (1976). However, there has been a scattering of perceptive essays since those earlier ones collected by George Wickes in *Henry Miller and the Critics* (1963), such as Frederick J. Hoffman's "Henry Miller, Defender of the Marginal Life" (*The Thirties*, ed. Warren French, 1967), Eleanor Rackow's "The Tropic in Court" (*Freedom and Culture*, 1970), Alan Friedman's "The Pitching of Love's Mansion in the *Tropics*..." (*Henry Miller: Three Decades of Criticism*, ed. Edward B. Mitchell, 1971), and Donald Gutierrez, "Tropic of Cancer..." (*Mosaic*, 11 [1977]). Also frequently insightful were Norman Mailer's prefatory pieces about Miller as his failed alter ego in his rather idiosyncratic anthology, *Genius and Lust* (1976).

Perhaps Henry Miller is too problematic a subject for the fat uncritical books that characterize aggrandizing academic production. But Jay Martin's earnest though intellectually inadequate attempt will probably long remain a standard source of information about a sometimes comically charming, poignant and suggestive literary eccentric and representative American grotesque, since *Tropic of Cancer* and a handful of sketches will long be read.

KINGSLEY WIDMER

San Diego State University

Mindscreen: Bergman, Godard, and First-Person Film by Bruce F. Kawin. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978. Pp. xii + 241. $15.50, cloth; $4.95, paper.

Professor Kawin attempts to answer standard questions about film narrative in new ways, and despite some major shortcomings in this book, anyone seriously interested in the study of narrative structure in film should read it. Kawin argues that, although a camera does not possess consciousness and cannot literally be termed an *I*, "it is possible to encode the image in such a way that it gives the impression of being perceived or generated by a consciousness. Although this mind remains offscreen, its existence is implicit and can be integrated into the fiction, with the result that the field is properly termed first person." What Kawin calls "mindscreen cinema" is most usually associated with "systemic reflexivity, or self-consciousness." In its most complex forms it invites the viewer to "share my mind's eye" or "to share my reflexive perspective."

After establishing his concepts in the opening chapter, Kawin then proceeds to analyze various films which employ what he terms the device of "mindscreen." He is at his best when carefully considering Milton Moses Ginsberg's rarely discussed *Coming Apart* and Ingmar Bergman's frequently analyzed *Persona*. He is at his worst when he presents brief, eccentric readings of films, often merely mentioned in passing. For instance, he claims that the image field of Bergman's *Cries and Whispers* may be retinal and that the dissolves into red can be seen as the blood "which circulates through the retina and which, analogously, gives color to the eyelids closed against intense light." Along with such ingenious interpretations, Kawin also lapses into passages of pseudo-poetic prose. "Between the dreaming artist and the dreaming audience, the artifact mediates." In a recent issue of the film journal *Take One*, Kawin claims that he is "basically a poet, but nobody prints my poetry (the best thing I do)." Perhaps, if he had avoided flights of poetic fancy in the opening section of *Mindscreen*, his basic concepts could have been more convincingly presented to the reader.

The major problem with the book, however, derives from its unsatisfactory structure. Kawin neither adequately extends his conception of "mindscreen" nor fully discusses its implications in the first section of his book, and the second half of the text is devoted exclusively to the films of Ingmar Bergman and Jean-Luc Godard. Indeed, he even includes an introductory chapter on Bergman's career. As a result, the book appears to be an amalgam of two incomplete projects: one dealing with an investigation of "mindscreen" and the other concerned with a comparative analysis of the narrative strategies of Bergman and Godard.

JOSEPH A. GOMEZ

Wayne State University

Script Into Performance: A Structuralist View of Play Production by Richard Hornby. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1977. Pp. xi + 215. $11.95.

This book is far more important than the crude, primer-like artwork on its cover would lead the book browser to believe. It is an irritating book but then so are vaccines and, make no mistake, this book could well be considered an inoculation against several viruses that have attacked modern theatre. Those most in need of this vaccination are the traditional critics who continue to expatiate on the nature of plays as though they were literary phenomena the functions of which are securely imprinted upon pages of paper. A second group in equal need of immunization is a coterie of directors which has burgeoned during the last thirty to forty years, directors who cavalierly insist that drama is something which occurs solely under their ministrations and only upon a stage. These directors, perhaps in rebellion against the blinkered teachings of the "traditional literary critics of drama," have begun to regard the printed script with unforgivable insouciance; many of them have fallen prey to the delusion that they are primary creators because they have set *The Taming of the Shrew* in Western-cowboy staging. Others have disclaimed the usefulness of the printed script completely, dedicating themselves to improvisational pieces created collectively by a company of actors under their directorial titillation. Hornby's book is one of the most able assaults upon these theatrical maladies and one of the strongest defenses I have read for the integrity and value of the playwright within the theatrical procedure.

Of course, there are weak plays in need of directorial mending and, of course, improvised pieces have their authenticity in production—and these are two aspects of dramatic practice that Hornby does not treat fairly or with sufficient sympathy. It is bigoted to deny an improvised theatrical piece critical appraisal because it lacks a script. Horby's bias in this area deserves only a risive response. His avoidance of the problem of dealing with weak scripts is almost Germanic in its rigid insistence upon the authority of the playwright through his play script. Any intelligent theatre person, and I confess that I've met very few, could point out weaknesses of structure in such plays as *Timon of Athens*, *Peer Gynt*, or *The Changeling*—weaknesses, I might add, which are discernible via the processes of investigation recommended by Hornby himself. Why shouldn't a director correct the ending of *Gynt*, or qualify the discovery of the new gold in *Timon*, or repair the failure to fuse the subplot with the main plot of *The Changeling*?

With regard to improvised theatre pieces, Mr. Hornby seems to refuse to admit that the critic has an obligation infinitely more demanding than that of the person who evaluates a performance birthed from the womb of an available script. In the case of the improvised piece the critic must "give back" to the actors their performance as they could not see it or understand it. Such a critic must *read* action, not just words; he must be able to hear meaning as well as see it. This critical injunction was expressed and demonstrated by the first *modern* critic of drama and, perhaps, still the best of them all, Soren Kierkegaard.

Mr. Hornby's major achievement lies in his ability to exemplify his passion for careful and informed interpretation of a script. He makes evident how woefully deficient are the modes of interpretation of "conventional" literary criticism of drama. He makes painfully evident the stupidities of "theatricalist" directors who wish to climb onto the shoulders of a playwright's creativity by "re-doing" his play in silly anachronistic interpretations or ones that answer not to the text but, rather, to the rigid thematic biases of the director. The first part of the book (while being the most biased or polemical section) is also a fine explication of how one goes about approaching a text for critical *and* directorial interpretation (the two kinds of appraisal should not be remarkably different). My only quibbles with this section of the book are that Mr. Hornby appears to share along with Brecht and many others at least a minor aversion to plot as an element of organization for a dramatic work. "Who does what to whom, where, and how, and in what order?" is still an important query of theatrical anaylsis even, or perhaps especially, in absurdist drama. I resist, also, his implication that a playscript is almost sacrosanct. In this instance, I get a strong sensation that Mr. Hornby is recommending that I must swallow a whole script the way I was once told by my mother to hold my nose in order to take a tablespoonful of something which was supposed to be good for me. I am on Hornby's side, however, because (despite his adoration of the printed text) he does most vehemently recommend a thorough analysis of the text prior to writing a critique or directing the play. He explains how to go about such an analysis and then he has the courage to demonstrate his recommendations with three good examples of his own work—the finest being his interpretation of Pinter's *The Homecoming*. Few theorists are this brave; even fewer are this able.

The inestimable worth of Hornby's book is that it reminds us once again that theatre is the most complicated of all human forms of communication and, therefore, that such a complex phenomenon requires a creative interpretative skill not likely to emerge from the intellectual ruminations of quasi-literate minds—singly or collectively. It also strikes a strong blow for those of us who must still struggle against the pontifical bigotry of those literateurs who insist that productions are lesser phenomena and not worthy of analysis because they are divorced from the printed page. Irritating as I found some of his minor biases, I am vehemently on Hornby's side. He makes it perfectly evident why we need not pose the question "Why are there no more Shakespeares?" and he makes it perfectly clear why we may demand that critics and directors at least be able to follow the bent of Shakespeare's gaze *before* they launch into irresponsible interpretations and transmogrifications of his texts.

WILLIAM I. OLIVER

University of California, Berkeley

Anatomies of Egotism: A Reading of the Last Novels of H. G. Wells by Robert Bloom. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1977. Pp. ix + 196. $10.95.

Robert Bloom is a trustworthy and acute reader and he does Wells a great service in this study of the late novels. But, though he may be able to persuade a stranger who has not read these novels that Wells remained an accomplished novelist almost to the end, I doubt that he will convince anyone well-acquainted with the Wells canon. Bloom's interpretations are flawless, and, after a thorough summary of Wells' views on fiction in the first chapter, he describes Wells' novelistic techniques splendidly. But a masterful—and one must insist intermittent—command of such techniques does not necessarily produce a fine novel. Wells remained a bold and thoughtful novelist even through *Babes In The Darkling Wood*, which Bloom is willing to abandon. But in the novels that Bloom tries to defend—*The Bulpington of Blup* (1932), *Brynhild* (1937), and *Apropos of Dolores* (1938)—he was no longer a real artist of fiction. It is good that Professor Bloom has called attention to Wells' late achievements, for Wells remained an effective writer, but claims for his sustained excellence as a novelist do not stand up.

This is a solid, well-written book, though far too much of the text is devoted to quotation and to recapitulation of plots and arguments from the three main novels considered, leaving very little room for outright interpretation. This is too bad, since Bloom's readings are more satisfying than Wells' narratives.

JOHN R. REED

Wayne State University

Melville's Short Fiction, 1853-1856 by William B. Dillingham. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1977. Pp. 390. $16.50.

William B. Dillingham set out to achieve three main objectives—to explicate the internal patterns of Melville's short pieces, to demonstrate that much of nineteenth-century popular culture was interwoven into these pieces, to argue that Melville's art of irony and indirection resulted from writing for magazines (principally *Harper's* and *Putnam's*) which "demanded palatable art for queasy minds." He succeeded admirably with the first two points, especially in the chapter on circle imagery and echo technique in "Benito Cereno" and in the chapter on sources for "The Happy Failure" and "The Fiddler" respectively. However, his third point is exaggerated and inaccurate. As one case in point, in the same issue in which appeared "Benito Cereno" (*Putnam's* VI, December, 1855) an essay was printed called "About Niggers" (608-612) which initially invoked racist epithets, then mused for a few pages on the recent black revolt in Santo Domingo, and then concluded that the revolt "ought to conceive the skeptic that the nigger is not a joke, and no baboon; he is simply a black-man, and I say: Give him fair play and let us see what he will come to." That this essayist employed the same technique of indirection indicates that Melville's art of defiance had its tradition even in the magazines which he helped to enrich.

HENRY GOLEMBA

Wayne State University

Jack London: The Man, The Writer, The Rebel by Robert Barltrop. New York: Urizen Books, Inc., 1977. Pp. 206. $10.00.

Barltrop's book is a non-scholarly biographical introduction to Jack London. Its 206 pages include a foreword, fourteen chronological chapters, notes, a list of London's works, an index and twenty-eight photographs. The author excludes a bibliography "because I doubt its value for the general reader." He thinks we need a book discussing London "as writer, socialist and whatever else, and man."

We have three long biographies, several autobiographical volumes, and London's letters, so the need for anything short of a full-dress scholarly biography is doubtful. And although the foreword promises "a good deal of material not included in any previous work," this is a considerable exaggeration. In fact, Barltrop provides mainly a convenient redaction of material published elsewhere, though indebtedness could seldom be ascertained by the uninitiated. (The third footnote occurs on page 34, after twenty-three derivative pages.) The "general reader" must meanwhile trust the omniscience of the author, who is relying on such sources as Charmian London, Jack's flighty widow, whose two-volume biography protests her candor and then conceals her husband's bastardy. Barltrop's highly irregular Notes pass over most debts in silence, but cite many letters. The hope that these are unpublished sources, however, proves false, and raises the question of whether any original research occurred at all.

In truth, the whole process of unsystematic redaction deserves challenging. If accurate information is retold in new language, inaccuracies and confusions are likely to arise. If inaccurate or unverified lore is repeated, it becomes increasingly sanctified by custom. And if facts and conjectures are not scrupulously separated, the reader doesn't know what he's got, as in Barltrop's book.

In his last chapter, Barltrop estimates London, having acknowledged the difficulties this man poses: his virulent racism, his jingoism, male chauvinism, egotism; his alcoholism, incipient insanity, probable suicide; his philosophical contradictions and political apostasy; his claim that he wrote for money, and all the potboilers that prove he meant it. Here is unruly material for an apologist. London "cannot be dismissed," because of his large output, enduring popularity, and achievements in advance of his times, yet the author's own reasons for liking London are unclear. Of the writer, Barltrop can remark that *The People of the Abyss* was "the most, and perhaps the only, truly sincere work" of London's career. Of the socialist, he believes that "Jack London socialism," regardless of its inconsistencies, appealed to working-class readers partly because of its crudity, partly because of the self-made man who espoused it. Of the man, Barltrop can "still feel affection as for a problematic friend," yet he depicts a self-intoxicated egomaniac, drunkard, philanderer, slave trader, plagiarist, writer who hated writing, and much else. Because too little effort is given to climbing back out of this deep hole, the book proves disappointing, whether as biography or apology.

COLIN CASS

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STEPHEN OWEN AND WALTER L. REED[*]

A Motive for Metaphor

Among the many ways in which language exerts its tyranny over us, the choice of parts of speech for phenomena is one of the most subtle. At some time in our education we were reading a poem and our teacher pointed out a word and told us, " that's a metaphor." Ever after we were convinced that a " metaphor " was a " thing " of some sort; we found these " things " in texts where they were masquerading as regular words. Our teachers further taught us to seek out metaphors behind their disguises, to evict them from their positions in the sentence, and to put the right words back in their places. We were, in fact, very grateful for this instruction, because we had been using metaphors for many years and had not known quite what to do with them. Thereafter we continued our lives happily secure in our knowledge that metaphors were special kinds of " things," different from real words but hiding among them. But what we really learned, or had known all along, was how to " metaphor," how to perform an operation in which we moved from a duplicitous text to a " real " meaning somewhere else. As we grew older this real meaning became more and more difficult to discover, but the energy of the operation was predicated on the assumption that such a meaning existed—somewhere.

What we would like to propose in this essay is a thoroughgoing operational theory of metaphor, a theory designed to avoid the pitfalls of the substantive and/or spatial notions of metaphor that have predominated in discussions of the topic or phenomenon since Aristotle. This theory borrows from structural linguistics, but it also makes some modifications of the most important of the structuralist discussions of metaphor, Roman Jakobson's concept of the metaphoric and metonymic poles. Jakobson's is a well-known and influential distinction, but as we shall argue, it involves a misleading limitation of the term " metaphoric " and an unjustified privileging of the term " metonymic " when one is considering the function of metaphors in particular literary texts.[1]

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[1] See " Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbance," *Fundamentals of Language* [with Morris Halle] (The Hague: Mouton, 1956), pp. 90-96.

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Metaphor is an operation that calls into play both paradigmatic (Jakobson's "metaphoric") and syntagmatic (Jakobson's "metonymic") relations; it cannot be limited to either alone.

In fact, most modern semiological and structuralist theories, which have proven so useful in studies of narrative, run into serious difficulties when they try to account for metaphor, the old stronghold of Anglo-American formalism. The new terms don't offer much help: metaphor is a sign whose signified is a relationship between its usual signified and another sign or signified; it is a staggered system whose structure is indistinguishable from that of connotation. Such reductive descriptions do not account for the essential disjunction which begins the metaphorical process, nor the event that occurs called "metaphor."

The critical literature on metaphor is voluminous, extending from Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* to recent issues of scholarly journals in this country and abroad.[2] What we offer here is a merging of the systematic precision of early structuralism (Saussure, Jakobson, Barthes, and Greimas) with the insistence on particularized ambiguity and tension in the early Anglo-American formalists (Richards, Empson, Wimsatt, and Brooks). In effecting this merger, we end up sharing the post-structuralist suspicion, voiced by Derrida, de Man, and the later Barthes, that the real problem is not metaphorical or figurative language so much as the necessary illusion of a literal, referential truth.[3]

Certain fundamental questions naturally arise when we consider how a metaphor functions in a text. How do we *know* when Rilke writes about a panther that he is not just writing about a panther? How do we know when Achilles acts "like a lion," that this does not mean that he settles down with slain Hector under some tree of the Trojan plain and dines on him? In short, 1) how do we know that a metaphorical relationship is operative, 2) how can we describe the interaction of terms which creates the meaning of a metaphor, and 3) of the multitude of possible relationships between the two terms of a metaphor how do we know which are functional and which are not? We will take up the first two questions later; let us consider now how we know what elements to relate in a metaphor, how we know what the correct third terms are. How do we know that Achilles is like a lion in strength, ferocity, etc. and not that he has great tufts of tawny fur around his neck?

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[2] E.g. the special issues devoted to the topic of metaphor in *New Literary History*, 5 (1974), *Poetics* (August, 1975), and *Critical Inquiry*, 5 (1978). An exhaustive survey, running to some 300 pages, is provided by Warren A. Shibles, *Metaphor: An Annotated Bibliography* (Whitewater, Wisc., 1971).

[3] See Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," *New Literary History*, 6 (1975), 5-74; Paul de Man, "Theory of Metaphor in Rousseau's *Second Discourse*," *Romanticism: Vistas, Instances, Continuities*, ed. David Thorburn and Geoffrey Hartman (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), pp. 83-114; Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), esp. pp. 3-22.

The reason we have picked such an absurd countercase is to reveal the extent to which both literary language and ordinary language privilege certain attributes above others. If a western and a Chinese poet compare a king to a dragon, their comparisons *mean* different things, not simply because Chinese and western dragons have different attributes (Chinese dragons can be malevolent too), but because there is a different hierarchy of privilege in those attributes. The possible attributes of any thing or class of things are virtually infinite. It is part of our cultural coding to choose and rank essential attributes. If asked to list the characteristics of a lion, the members of one cultural group will produce similar terms, especially in the privileged position at the beginning of the list. This cultural coding is essential for reading literature. For Marino, Maria de Medici's breasts are like snow because whiteness and coldness, associated with chastity, are privileged attributes—we do not imagine that they fell from the sky, that no two are identical, that they will melt if warm water is poured on them, that they appear only in the winter.

If the privileging of certain attributes transcends context, the absurd countercases demand exclusion because of context. The most elegant formulation of a theory of context is Greimas' notion of isotopy: simply stated, Greimas' theory is that when we read, we organize the semantic possibilities in the words and phrases of a discourse towards coherence, automatically excluding the semantic irrelevancies.[4] Thus, on a simple level, given the two sentences "in the race he broke the record" and "walking through the messy room he broke a record," we are able to decide the correct semantic value of "record" in each case from a coherence of semantic units, or semes, elsewhere in the sentences.

There is no difficulty in this process when we are dealing with simple sentences, but in more complex literary situations, isotopy is always an unrealized end. We name this distance from isotopy "disjunction."[5] Textual disjunction may occur either on the level of the language of the community as a whole ("...And I must enter again the round/Zion of the water bead/And the synagogue of the ear of corn...") or it can be intended into a text according to the code of a particular group (e.g. the Bible does not mean what it seems to mean, but is in fact an immense numerological system). But whether it occurs on the level of shared language or on the level of the rules of reading of a special group, disjunction is a phenomenon which occurs continually in the reading process.

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[4] A. J. Greimas, *Sémantique structurale* (Paris: Larousse, 1936), pp. 69-101.

[5] It might be argued that we are underestimating the complexity of non-literary language here. In Greimas' more recent writings (e.g. *Maupassant: la sémiotique*

When a reader encounters a series of metaphors like Dylan Thomas' "...And I must enter again the round/Zion of the water bead/And the synagogue of the ear of corn..." isotopy, the semantic coherence of the text, is thwarted.[6] The first operation that must be performed is to isolate the semes, the basic semantic units of the words. Then the reader must try to find one or more semes which unify the disparate elements and link them with the text to that point. Here we find a group of semes including dissolution, death and rebirth, and religious worship. These semes may come from single images; for example, the "water bead" may be a dewdrop or a raindrop. Associations with the soul and with the impermanence of life rank fairly highly among the dewdrop's privileged literary attributes. Similarly the raindrop is easily associated with nurture and vegetative growth. The two thus can be unified in the seme of "the cycle of death and rebirth."

The unifying semes of the line may also come from larger syntactic units, but these larger units can be disjunctive (and thereby initiate the metaphorical process) just as easily as single words and images. On the level of character there is the very real problem of how the gargantuan poet can "enter" a drop of water or an ear of corn. The contextual seme of "dissolution" offers one possible resolution. However, the multiplicity of significant semes will constantly generate new areas of disjunction: for example, we have a contradiction between the idea of physical dissolution and the integrity of the "I" who will

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du texte [Paris, 1976]) and even more in the earlier Marxist semiotics of M. M. Bakhtin and his circle (e.g. V. N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik [New York: Seminar Press, 1973]) the notions of "cultural competence" and "play of ideologies" indicate that such disjunctions are pervasive in other types of language and text as well. Relatively speaking, however, literary discourse heightens and foregrounds the disjunctive potential within and between other language and culture systems.

[6] "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, By Fire, of a Child in London," *The Collected Poems of Dylan Thomas* (New York: New Directions, 1957), p. 112.

be in Zion and the synagogue. The identity which is the soul is not going to Heaven but is entering the physical world with the dissolving body. We try to repair the contradiction with another unifying seme, pantheism, and as we do so, we are forced to suppress some of the privileged literary attributes of the dewdrop. The process never ends: new disjunctions constantly arise, and isotopy is never achieved. The reader may close off this process by an act of will: he may declare that the text is entirely coherent and all disjunctive elements are accounted for. But such willed closure is only a screen against a virtually infinite potentiality for disjunction in any text, once the initial disjunction is signalled on the text's surface. Whether the reader chooses to stop at some satisfying point or is willing to confront the plenitude of new disjunctions and tentative resolutions is immaterial, since the metaphor lies only in the process from disjunction towards isotopy.

If we return to our simpler example "Achilles is a lion," we can see essentially the same thing occurring on a low level of disjunction. Here it is easier to close off the process than in the Dylan Thomas lines. Given the context of the *Iliad*, "human" is not one of the primary semes of Achilles, but in "Achilles is a lion" the human-animal dichotomy comes to the fore. The initial ground of coherence lies in privileged attributes such as "brave," "fierce," etc. shared by Achilles and the lion. The essential disjunction lies in the dichotomy of animal versus human; this is the issue called into question by the metaphor, and it is on this level that the process towards isotopy occurs. Here the hierarchy of meanings of "Achilles" is changed to include all kinds of animal traits which can be integrated in the isotopy of the text—unthinking *animal* strength and courage, a rampage of blood-lust.

The presentation of a piece of literature involves a complex series of operational modifications on the *langue* of the community: when a printed page looks at you and says "Sonnet," a set of new laws of reading and expectations takes over. A non-literary analogy to this might be when a parent listens to a child or a dentist listens to a patient: the functional phonetic, semantic, or syntactic discriminations of ordinary language cease to function and new sets of rules develop. If an adult were to hear another adult deliver the typical sentence of a two year old, it would not be comprehensible unless it was realized on some level that "this adult is speaking like a child." As Roland Barthes says, literature is *institutionalized* subjectivity. The problem of how metaphorical language means can never be wholly resolved in the text itself or in terms of the laws of ordinary language.

There are three kinds of modifications on the shared *langue* of the community which occur in a literary text. The first of these is "literarity" itself, a set of semiotic operations, the most important of which is hypersignification. Hypersignification is *not* an inherent quality of a text, though there are texts into which it is intended, which fulfill or facilitate this mode of reading. Everyone is aware of the difference between reading a novel for pleasure and reading a novel critically: literarity and hypersignification are a continuum of possibilities in the way to read a text. When we sit down with a text, we choose the level of literarity with which we want to approach it. Our choice is usually influenced by powerful cultural and social codes: "this novel is a 'classic,' therefore it has a multiplicity of meanings"; "I must 'teach' this novel tomorrow; therefore I will it to have a multiplicity of meanings."

When we intend hypersignification in our reading, everything potentially signifies, and the majority of the significations are hidden. This hiddenness of signification is a crucial act of alienation from the language of the community as a whole, a separation of the initiate and the uninitiate: one reads "good" novels at college or if one is intelligent or well educated, and we presume that we find more "hidden signification" ("read better") at certain universities than at others, etc. This privilege of literarity, its status as an act of asserting class superiority, has bothered many critics. A less menacing side of the hiddenness of signification, alienation from the language of the community, is that of subjectivity, emphasizing the privacy of perception. This aspect is emphasized in an essay like Walker Percy's "Metaphor as Mistake": literature in its hiddenness mediates between the communal and the subjective, between the individuated and the shared.[7]

The second kind of modification on the language of the community is that of the dialects or idiolects. There are authorial idiolects, generic idiolects, class idiolects, and others. The *langue* as a whole has no concept of frequency: it is merely a set of possibilities. The idiolect creates a hierarchical ordering of the possibilities of the *langue*. We, as readers, translate these hierarchies of language into expectations: we expect a certain author to talk about certain topics in certain ways using certain vocabulary, certain recurring images, syntactic patterns, etc. With these expectations, we enter into a dialogue with a text in terms of how it "speaks" this private language, the idiolect.

[7] *The Message in the Bottle* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1975), pp. 64-82.

Like literarity, the various idiolects emphasize their variance from the language of the community: their hierarchical orderings exist to differentiate one speech act from another and to classify them. To use colloquial language in a sonnet highlights "colloquiality" in a way that hearing colloquial language in the street does not. This is a negative use of the idiolect, a perversion of expectations. On the positive side, we know that if Mallarmé writes about an ocean voyage in a poem, it is likely he is referring to the act of writing a poem. The reason we know this is not from anything inherent in the poem itself, but because that is one of the operations of signification which has a high frequency in the poetry of Mallarmé.

The third kind of modification is the creation of an inner *langue* of the text itself; i. e. a text is not only a *parole*, actualizing some of the possibilities of the communal language, it also creates its own internal language. As the nature of the *langue* as a whole can only be approached through the individual speech acts of the community, so the *langue* of a text is perceived through the speech act of the text itself. That inner *langue* of the text attains meaning as it differentiates itself from the *langue* of the community as a whole.

Structuralists will usually emphasize the self-referentiality of a literary work, that literature is about literature; i.e. the creation of a sign system is an act of such authority that it always takes itself as its own end. But orthodox structuralists are often trapped by this self-referentiality and as a result they cannot account for metaphor. As such structuralists would say, a text "speaks itself," but they find it difficult to explain how a text "speaks itself" about something else, and how it "speaks itself" for the sake of something else.

Metaphor stands at the heart of all three of these modifications of the communal *langue*. First of all, metaphor is the primary tool of hypersignification: it is, in fact, the term we give to the suspension of the usual, limiting significatory system of language. We asked earlier how we know when a metaphorical relationship is operative. In everyday speech we usually use only metaphors that are dead, dying, or in varying states of decay. Usually we include both terms of the metaphor: "You are my sunshine," but not "sunshine made my dinner." But when we intend literarity into a text, any disjunctive element is potentially a metaphor. And the text as a whole, insofar as we intend into it meaning other than what it says, is a vast metaphor for a hidden truth. Second, metaphor is the primary tool of the idiolects: if a metaphorical term does not mean what it means in ordinary language and if it does not mean "anything whatsoever," then it must have a limited range of meaning which is *other than* its usual meaning. In the general sense, this " other meaning " is the essential act of differentiation from the language of the community which characterizes the idiolect: in itself it is an act of individuation. In the specific, the repetition of certain kinds of metaphor is essential to the establishment of an idiolect. The signified is neither random nor usual, but rather definite and repeatable within the system of the idiolect.

The individuation which metaphor performs in the idiolect helps make the literary object a possession, a possession having two components: 1) exclusion of others and 2) association of the object with a subject. Metaphor excludes the community at large in favor of the individual or initiate-group and in doing so it associates itself with them. Thus by making certain kinds of metaphors, Wallace Stevens says "*my* language—not Hart Crane's, not Eliot's, *mine*."

In the internal *langue* of a text, metaphor functions in several ways. The essence of a syntagm in the *langue* is repeatability. Particularly when we are dealing with the inner *langue* of a text, we are learning a new language, and a language is learned by substitution; for example, we learn the subject-verb-object construction by repetition in which we substitute innumerable subjects, verbs, and objects. The metaphorical substitutions in a text are a condensed indication of substitutions in the syntagms of a text, that the relationships which the syntagm sets up have general as well as particular application.

Metaphor is of course more important on the paradigmatic level in that out of a multiplicity of possible paradigms, it asserts one given paradigm. This is close to Greimas' notion of the classeme.[8] A metaphor is not simply a substitution but rather it sets up a significant paradigm row. In its function as a discriminator, metaphor privileges one class of things, and within that class the metaphor takes on meaning in relation to other things of its kind.

III

The appropriate question now is how does all this theory apply in an actual text. As an example, we can go through the first strophe of Pindar's Olympian XI, in Bowra's translation (For Hagesidamos of Western Lokroi, winner in the boy's boxing):

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[8] *Sémantique structurale*, pp. 50-54.

There is a time when men's strongest need
Is for the winds, and a time for the sky's water,
The clouds' showery children.
If anyone toils and succeeds,
Sweet voices of song
Are paid on account for words to come
And a faithful pledge to surpassing actions.[9]

Here is an excellent example of how substitution functions in establishing a basic syntagm: X needs Y. Man needs winds, and man needs rain. On the paradigmatic level, which we will take up in detail later, we notice that in the first case " man " is substituted for " sailor," and in the second case for " farmer," two paradigmatic series generalizing the situation. The third substitution, the third element in the paradigmatic row, is that the " victor needs song." Pindar, however, leaves that implicit, and instead expands his primary syntagm to encompass the fulfillment of the need: the poet gives the victor the song he needs. What is interesting is that the fulfillment arises from a complementary need on the part of the poet: he " owes " the victor the song. Notice that initial substitutions limit the syntagm and cut off the element of exchange: there is no *quid pro quo*, only a statement of a subject and his need. It is the silence about the exchange (what the sailor gives for his winds, the farmer for his rain, or the victor for his song) which makes the singer's " gift " of song to satisfy *his* debt an expansion of the syntagm. Thus we can say that the " gift of song " is *generated* by silences about reciprocity in need and giving in the opening metaphors and implied tenor: the first two metaphors and the implied tenor generate a need for reciprocity which the gift of song *partially* fulfills. The song does not satisfy the " debt " ; it is only " payment on account." Instead of simply fulfilling the need, a complementary need or debt is taken care of in the fulfillment. The last two lines of the strophe project the reciprocity forward in time: you will give more actions; I will give more words. The poem is, in its multiple substitutions, developing an internally complete language of need, receiving, and giving, bringing the syntagm from an unstable state of need and desire to a stable state of continuous reciprocity.

Now if we turn to the paradigmatic aspect, we see a paradigmatic series has been set up: man/sailor/farmer/one who " toils and succeeds "

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[9] *The Odes of Pindar*, trans. C. M. Bowra (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 62.

(Olympian victor)/poet—all the people who have " need," the subjects of the reciprocity. Fundamentally, these subjects of reciprocity are defined by what they do, and with the exception of the Olympian victor, the definition of the subject is economic. This definition of the subject is from the syntagm of Need transforming into that of Reciprocity: the subject is defined by what he can produce to fill out the syntagm of reciprocity which is simultaneously being generated. Here we have a clue for the motives for the substitution of " man " for sailor and farmer: in the system of Need without Reciprocity, their functional definition, what they can produce, is suppressed. The inclusion of the Olympian victor, and to some extent the poet, in this paradigmatic series assimilates them into the exchange system; i.e. the Olympian victor can have his functional, economic position in society defined by his victory as can the poet by his poetry—they become valid tokens of exchange. Indeed, a critic of Marxist persuasion could say that the purpose of the strophe is to justify the non-laboring classes' inclusion as " producers in an economic system."

Next we consider the short paradigm of reciprocity: " paid on account for words to come. . .faithful pledge to surpassing action." For " paid on account," the Greek has simply *archa*: " a *beginning* is accomplished for words to come." Though Bowra's translation may seem stretching it, it is also the indication of a sure understanding of Pindar that he grasps the essentially economic nature of this strophe. The economic metaphor becomes explicit with the " pledge," *orkion*, an " oath " or in economic terms, a " surety." This creates a paradigmatic row of " songs-beginnings-pledge." Notice that these songs paid are likewise substitutions for future songs, a " surety " in partial payment and promise. In the development of this paradigm the " thing," the song, is transformed into a function in the exchange system. The singer with his song is like the sailor-merchant with his goods or the farmer with his seed. The promise of growth and increase allows the substitution of promise for payment in the exchange system: this is how what is needed can be acquired with nothing to give for it. From mere need we have moved to partial payment, possible because the goods will increase and pay off the debt. The insufficient " thing " becomes sufficient and thereby can participate in the exchange system. In between the " thing," " songs," and its transformation as a function, the " pledge," lies the crucial mediating term in the transformation, " beginning," *archa*: this term changes the immobility of need and the insufficiency of the thing offered into a continuing process of reciprocity, fulfills the diachronic nature of the syntagm by promising future movement.

Now the last and most interesting paradigm can become comprehensible: "sky's water, the clouds' showery children." Here our paradigmatic row is (rain/water/children). The bipolar paradigm is the most common metaphorical form, and despite the three element row we have above, this paradigm is essentially bipolar. This bipolar form is different from a full paradigmatic row. A series like man/(sailor)/(farmer)/victor/poet works differently from "sky's water, clouds' showery children," or "poet, farmer of song." A multiplicity of elements in a paradigmatic row repeat one unifying seme with enough frequency to increase exclusions and clarify the paradigm.

A bipolar paradigm is an "open" or "potential" paradigm. It simultaneously enforces the otherness of the vehicle and engenders a project to assimilate it into the inner *langue* of the poem. Furthermore, it indicates the language-making function of the poem; it insists that new paradigms are being made. In short, a metaphor is a kind of sign that reveals itself as "merely sign." Equal to this metalinguistic function is the kinetic aspect mentioned above, the project to join the two elements in a new language and reestablish system. Because the bipolar paradigm is only a "potential" paradigm (i.e. the unifying terms between the two elements of the metaphor are potential rather than actual), it directs toward signification rather than pretending to it. Here the good structuralist will stop, staying inside the text: the metaphor is an indicator of system itself rather than of any given system; it is language about language. Metaphor is in its very form an actualization of desire and need, the mark of an absence—the readily available unifying term which dissipates the tension, undoes the otherness, and kills the metaphor. Hence we can see the function of the bipolar metaphor at this particular point in the strophe when unfulfilled need is the initial form of the syntagm.

As with all forms of desire and need, the metaphor, the process of unifying disjunctive terms, destroys itself on attainment (hence Pindar's resolution of the strophe with only a *promise* of fulfillment). We hurry metaphors to their "death" by explaining them, and always feel let down with explanation, when we close the paradigm, fix the points of correlation, unite subject and other. The potential, by its very openness, is always fuller than the actual.

However, to explain bipolar metaphor merely as an indicator is seriously to miss the point: without the *process*, the enactment of reasserting a closed paradigm, we leave it impotent; whatever metaphor is, it lies neither in the *fact* of potentiality nor the fulfillment and closing off of the relationship, but rather, as we saw earlier, in the movement from one towards the other. What we do in reading is to move toward uniting the halves of the metaphor but stop before we close off the relationship. So let us do the obvious for the metaphor of the "clouds' showery children." The notion of the clouds begetting rain points towards the generation of seeds into crops, the farmer continuing into the future with rich crops and many children. It is the first element in the theme of production and increase taken up later in the strophe, the crucial shift in attention from the immobile present of need to the future fulfillment of continuous exchange. It is the generative point where one becomes many, the hidden parent of the *archa*, the "beginnings" later in the strophe.

What we have been trying to show here is the essentially generative nature of the *langue* of the poem, how it takes a syntagm which defines itself by incompleteness and develops it into an internally complete range of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships. In every case, the possibility of metaphorical substitution is a precondition for this development.

IV

Thus our structural account of metaphor departs from orthodox structuralist pronouncements on metaphor in several ways. First, we emphasize that metaphor is an interpretative operation forced—and guided—by a disjunction in a particular narrative code or semantic context, that metaphor cannot be assimilated *within* a particular system but lies in the movement from one system to another, and that full reestablishment of semantic isotopy is the point at which metaphor ceases to be metaphorical. Secondly, we insist that as institutionalized subjectivity, literature is a *formalized* modification of the communal *langue*, that by hypersignification on the one hand and restriction of expectations on the other an idiolect is established with rules of a higher order than the rules of non-literary language in general. And finally, we propose that an idiolect is established by a particular text, through a generative process. Syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes are generated by particular sequences of predication and substitution, and through the interplay of these relations the full *langue* of the text is achieved. While adopting Jakobson's structure, derived from Saussure, we modify Jakobson's terminology, which identifies the metaphoric with only one of the coordinates of linguistic relationship and which weakens the Saussurian model of complementary *axes* by speaking of the metaphoric and metonymic *poles*. Jakobson limits the term *metaphor* at the same time that he expands the term *metonymy*, which in traditional rhetoric had always been considered as a subcategory of metaphor.

One might raise the question at this point whether something is gained for an understanding of metaphor by adopting any of the structuralist assumptions. Might it not be better for Anglo-American critics to remain within the more traditional analyses and terminologies—for example, I. A. Richards' venerable distinction between "tenor" and "vehicle"—and continue to value the tensional ambiguities that the New Criticism has found to be so central in literary metaphor? The only problem here is that metaphor means too much, and hence escapes formalization entirely. Richards' vehicle and tenor, in spite of his assertions that they are a distinction within metaphor alone and not a distinction between metaphor and meaning, fall back finally on the distinction between form and theme or content (Thus in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* Richards defines 'tenor' as "the underlying idea or principle subject which the vehicle means," an idea or subject which may not be present in the linguistic texture).[10] The syntagmatic and the paradigmatic, which we single out as the most fruitful of structuralist dichotomies, provide a more genuinely formal construct, in the way they describe linguistic relations and interpretative procedures. They provide a more flexible and a more thoroughgoing formalization of the text than the vehicle-tenor dichotomy, which in spite of itself must leave the thematic "tenor" out of the analysis—or rather must exclude it initially only to smuggle it in later on. "Tenor" is finally indistinguishable from "theme," which in New Critical interpretation is simply too ambiguous a term. On the one hand it means "the paraphrasable ideological content," with which we are not supposed to concern ourselves as critics; on the other hand, it is a kind of *deus ex machina* which rescues form from its mere formality, which provides it with a meaning and a goal.

Thus our structural theory of metaphor attempts to correct the excesses of over- and under-formalization in various types of modern criticism, and to restore the notion of process and the reader's experience of a text. As with any such critical concoction, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and we would like to validate these suggestions in another interpretation of a text. We choose Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* for this application, partly because it is so deliberately resistant to thematic designs like those of New Critical formalism, and partly because it is in many respects a reflection on the very process we have been describing—the process of moving from disjunction to isotopy through the mastery of a series of idiolects, involving the generation of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations. In other words, *Through the Looking-Glass* reflects on its own formal operations even as it frustrates the attempt to fix these operations in any homogenous " meaning."

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[10] *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 97.

V

The strategy of *Through the Looking-Glass* is to create a series of idiolects within the basic rules of the English language, a series of what Barthes would call staggered systems. Thus at the very beginning, we are informed by the author that the sequence of events in the narrative constitute a chess-problem—" White Pawn (Alice) to play, and win in eleven moves."[11] Interestingly enough, Saussure uses a chess game as a prime analogy for the functioning of language.[12] But in *Through the Looking-Glass*, the chess game exists on a lower level of signification; rather than adding a connotative dimension to the story, it reduces more complex happenings to its own idiosyncratic rules. To read Alice as a white pawn is to limit radically her possible meanings as a character, and to read her progress as a series of moves on a chessboard is to see a strict order in a wonderfully random sequence of encounters. The fact that chess puzzle purists have taken Carroll to task for fudging on the sequence of moves only points up the rigidity of this particular idiolect, a set of operations in which the question of meaning, or reference, becomes virtually irrelevant.

This masterplot of the chess puzzle is only one of the innumerable denotative reductions that Carroll forces upon the story. The whole conceit of a journey *through* the looking glass suggests a critique of the supposed referentiality of language, where a word is held to reflect or mirror an idea or thing. The endless nursery rhymes, literary parodies, riddles and parlor games which govern the actions and conversations of the different characters proclaim that words do not have to mean the official things that the adult world thinks they do, that in fact words do not have to *mean* at all. This is the significance of Carroll's nonsense, in which a linguistic sign is cut off from its normal linguistic constraints and made to refer first and foremost to itself. Thus we see the lion and the unicorn fighting for the crown not because these characters refer metaphorically to something other than themselves, but because they "mean" only the nursery rhyme which is the property of the child. Barthes would call these linguistic subsystems "metalanguages," reductive or analytical languages in which "the signifieds of the second system are constituted by the signs of the first."[13]

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[11] Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*, ed. Donald J. Gray (New York: Norton, 1971), p. 104.

[12] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, in collaboration with Albert Riedlinger, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), pp. 88-89.

Thus in a limited sense of metaphor, the traditional sense of metaphor we were given in our early education, *Through the Looking-Glass* is a profoundly anti-metaphorical book. It takes the child's part in resisting the tyranny of meaning and reference, insisting not on the semantic plenitude of language but on its logical poverty. "'Oh, you wicked, wicked little thing!' cried Alice, catching up the kitten and giving it a kiss to make it understand that it was in disgrace."[14] The sub-linguistic gesture cancels out the adult speech; there is no question of a "carrying-over" of reference from one context to another.

In terms of our operational definition of metaphor, however, where both syntagmatic rules and paradigmatic substitutions are in play, *Through the Looking-Glass* emerges as a classic example of metaphorical process. In her adventures, Alice turns out to encounter two types of linguistic distortion, which may best be exemplified by the poem "Jabberwocky" on the one hand, and by Humpty Dumpty's interpretation of the poem on the other. When Alice and the reader first read "Jabberwocky" (with the help of the looking glass they have already gone through) they have a clear understanding of sequence ("*somebody* killed *something*" Alice says), but very little understanding of identities ("Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas, only I don't know what they are").[15] The first stanza, the most densely non-sensical, is in fact a triumph of syntagm over paradigm: "Twas brillig, and the slithy toves/Did gyre and gimble in the wabe...." By a series of temporal and spatial clues, the authority of poetic narrative is asserted, and the absolute idiosyncracy of all the nouns, adjectives and verbs does not interfere with the purely syntagmatic comprehension. On the other hand, in Humpty Dumpty's glossing of the poem in the later chapter, paradigmatic substitutions are introduced, in a way that dismantles the coherence of any narrative progression. "At four o'clock in the afternoon, the lithe and slimy badger-lizard-cork screws were going round and round and making gimlet holes in the grass around the sundial...." We are left with a series of identities that cannot be brought into significant relation with one another. "'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.' 'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master—that's all.'"[16] In his excessive mastery of meanings Humpty Dumpty defeats the possibility of moving from one to another. Thus his own poem, which begins, "In winter when the fields are white," never gets beyond its beginning, and his theory of the portmanteau word, adopted with unfortunate consequences by James Joyce, is a semantic falling between two stools rather than a carrying over.

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[13] Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero and Elements of Semiology*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (Boston: Beacon, 1970), p. 92.

[14] *Alice in Wonderland*, p. 107.

[15] *Alice in Wonderland*, p. 118.

In fact, Carroll arranges these two types of linguistic disorder, curiously similar to the disorders of similarity and contiguity relations that Jakobson describes in his classic study of aphasia, so that the excess of syntagm occurs on the red squares and among the red chess pieces, while the excess of paradigm occurs on the white squares and with the white pieces. The Red Queen insists on literal meaning, killing off dead metaphors and generally bullying Alice about the rules of the game ('I don't know what you mean by *your* way,' said the Queen: "all the ways out here belong to me") and forcing her to go faster.[17] The White Queen is vague and disorganized; she can add but not subtract. She can read words of one letter, but has trouble remembering her own name. In her progress toward becoming a queen herself, Alice encounters and finally subsumes both extremes. She embodies the severity of the rule of rules, she incorporates the leniency of free association. She is thus initiated not into society (Carroll, it will be remembered, did not like little girls to pass through adolescence) but into language itself, into a command and mastery of the medium in which the adult world represents itself.

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[16] *Alice in Wonderland*, p. 163.
[17] *Alice in Wonderland*, p. 124.

Thus the initial syntagm of *Through the Looking-Glass*, which might be called "escape from the control of adult significance," turns out to be something very like the *paradigmatic* relations within language. Related terms are freely transformed by association, kittens become red queens, white queens become sheep in shops. But this initial syntagm is restructured by a paradigm row of substitutions, in which a series of *different* syntagms all claim their own autonomous rule. Given the special laws of each game within the game, a series of different consequences are entailed. Thus the paradigmatic axis of this text is something very like the *syntagmatic* axis of language in general, and the initial syntagm of "escape from adult significance" is redefined as "assumption of one's own authority through the mastery of language." The metaphorical operation of *Through the Looking-Glass* is therefore the redefinition of escape and control as freedom and authority. But the "meaning" of this process is not to be found in any fixed terms or positions. It takes place within the structure of the sign and not in the relationship of sign and referent. This is not to say that Carroll's text does not finally refer beyond itself, but it is to say that this reference is the point at which the operation of metaphor ceases.

VI

As a conclusion to our discussion, we would like to suggest the possibility of applying such a structural theory of metaphor to longer and more traditional narratives. If metaphor has proved to be a stumbling block for structuralism, narrative is an area in which the metaphorics of the New Criticism have proved least fruitful. Aristotle was interested in the example of Achilles as a lion (in which he claims there is no essential difference between metaphor and simile), but modern readers may also see Achilles as Diomedes, Ajax, Odysseus, and most explicitly Patroclus, the successive heroes who "stand in for" Achilles after his withdrawal in anger. The larger patterns of narrative in the *Iliad* come to signify in what is fundamentally a variation of the metaphorical process. The specific actions of heroic warfare repeated in the poem (often verbatim in the epic formulae) constitute a syntagmatic axis of plot. Within this framework of repetition, which in itself provides one ground of coherence, Diomedes, Ajax, Odysseus, and Patroclus become a series of paradigmatic substitutions for the figure of heroic perfection. The *Iliad* presents us with the declensions of epic endeavor in which the complete hero, like the infinitive form of the verb, seems to stand above the finite constraints of heroic action. When Achilles returns to the struggle, his identity subsumes the various modes of excellence of his alternate selves, but in his very totality, he points to the limits of epic heroism as a whole, the archaic fragility of the heroic culture that Homer is memorializing. Achilles is at once the perfection and the surpassing of epic codes.

On the plane of action, one might say, as well as on the plane of imagery, the *Iliad* enacts a metaphoric process that strives for isotopy of the various syntagmata but recognizes the impossibility of such isotopy ever being achieved. The various Greek heroes signify in relationship to the Achilles who is not there, until Achilles finally is there and finds that he too must stand in for Achilles who will soon be there no longer. In the novels of Jane Austen, to take a totally opposite example, it would seem that an isotopy of elements is so consummate and firmly established that any metaphorical process is all but impossible. The fanciful purveyors of substitution, such as Elizabeth Bennett or Emma Woodhouse, must purge themselves of a plastic imagination and learn the rational identity of things, and the pale consistency of Fanny Price would seem the ideal embodiment of the power to discriminate fixities and densities, to separate sameness from difference. But even Fanny's character in *Mansfield Park* is established by a version of the metaphorical process in which semantic isotopy is generated, challenged, and redefined.

We read the particularities of characterization, words and gestures, the way we read metaphors. As we easily discriminate the privileged semes of whiteness and chastity in the snow which is Maria de Medici's breasts, so when a character says "Damn you," we know he is expressing anger and not his fundamentalist religious convictions. Gestures and speech patterns are as culturally loaded with semes as metaphors: an angry phrase is no more the same as an irascible temperament than Achilles is the same as a lion or animal ferocity. Gestures and words have a range of disjunction in their contexts which is the same as the range of disjunction in metaphor. Much of traditional narrative is necessarily taken up with easily intelligible actions which give an easy sense of isotopy, like dead metaphors. But energy comes from disjunction upon this ground of coherence.

Thus Fanny Price's identity is established by a long series of actions which are unified by semes of modesty, sincerity, and moral sense. As a matter of fact, actions containing these semes appear so frequently that semes of consistency and stability must be included. From the repetitions of these semes, we quickly learn to exclude the accidental elements and particulars from the different aspects of Fanny's behavior in a given episode—or do we? When a disjunctive scene does come, it raises something of a crisis, and the narrator, who has been "reading" Fanny's actions along with the reader, tries desperately to restore isotopy. When Fanny returns to her natural family in Portsmouth, her attitude towards them is clearly unfilial. She disapproves of the confusion and poverty of the family from which she came in a way which strikes most readers as repugnant. What we have here is a deliberate challenge to the isotopy of her character. A struggle to restore isotopy begins, in which the narrator and the reader try to find a ground of coherence to unify her behavior in Portsmouth with her character earlier in the novel. We attempt to shift the weight from Fanny's unfilial attitude to the moral grounds for that attitude (e. g. her censure is expressed as a moral evaluation in which she contrasts the manners of Portsmouth with those of Mansfield Park). We might try to explain her attitude by saying that her "real" family is that of Mansfield Park, not her biological family. We demand that Fanny's behavior be significant and not random, and to make it signify we must find a ground of coherence. Sometimes we are compelled to name that ground of coherence "significant change." But in each case, the attempt to integrate a disjunctive element of narrative is essentially the metaphorical process. No conscientious reader feels that he or Austen has entirely succeeded in recapturing Fanny's awesome stability of character in the Portsmouth episode: isotopy of moral character is only achieved through the sacrifice of other moral possibilities.

These two examples tell us a great deal about how metaphor works in narrative. Actions and agents (plots and characters) occur as discrete literary codes, but they also occur in parallel as comparable versions of one another. We read along both these axes, following through the logic of a particular syntagmatic unit from beginning to end, but recalling analogically the similar sequences or concatenations which the latest syntagm appears to stand in for. "Meaning" in narrative, we would argue (which is ultimately an operation, a way of reading) is a subfunction of the metaphorical process. The syntagmatic level is "pure" narrative, but this level is continually crossed by the paradigmatic, in which stories lose their linear innocence. The metaphoric process as a whole may be combinatory and definitive, as in the *Iliad*:

Achilles' heroism is built up from lesser examples. Or it may be discriminatory and transformational: Fanny Price becomes her moral essence only in the course of a development. A more elaborate typology of narrative operations is possible, but would, we think, be misleading if it suggested a comprehensive system. Each text finally performs the act of metaphor according to the special rules that it lays down.

MARY POOVEY*

Ideology and "The Mysteries of Udolpho"

I

The system of "values, ideas and images" which cemented the position of the upper middle class within the social and political hierarchy of eighteenth-century England—and which perpetuated an illusion of power for that class even after the foundations of paternalism began to erode—was based on what eighteenth-century poets and philosophers called the "sentimental virtues." [1] "Sentimentalism," with its close kin "sensibility," was the ideology generalized from the theories of such eighteenth-century moral philosophers as David Hume and Adam Smith. Adapting Shaftesbury's theory of an innate moral faculty, Hume and Smith proposed that moral action was based on man's characteristic sympathetic response and, ultimately, that virtue was desirable because it advanced one's own welfare and gratified the desire for approval. In the course of the century, the values associated with this theory were used by the bourgeoisie to ennoble and justify almost all facets of behavior: aesthetic, ethical, economic, and political. Together, the theorists of sentimentalism projected a mythical society in which individual desires and collective needs participated in perfect reciprocity, where "natural" inequality was sanctioned because the poor and dependent automatically benefited from the unforced bene-

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[1] My use of "ideology" as a lived system of values follows the definition provided by Terry Eagleton in *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1976), pp. 16-17. "Ideology is not in the first place a set of doctrines; it signifies the way men live out their roles in class-society, the values, ideas and images which tie them to their social functions and so prevent them from a true knowledge of society as a whole." In this sense, an ideology is largely class-specific, although even the dominant ideology must contain values or images meaningful to other classes if it is to retain its power. See also Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 55-71, for a discussion of the history, ambiguities, and limitations of this term. Following Williams' critique of critics' tendency to limit ideology to separable *concepts*, I try here to show how, even for its proponents, ideology necessarily involves a *process* of producing meaning, the lived experience of testing, rejecting and affirming that system of values which defines one's position within a culture.

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volence of the "well-bred gentleman." But during the last decades of the century, the contradictions between these myths of the patronage system and actual economic and political conditions began to surface with increasing and alarming speed, and, as a result, the contradictions in the ideological cement itself became increasingly apparent. From the minor crowd disturbances at Tyburn to the mob action of the Gordon riots in 1780 was a short but profoundly significant step, an undeniable sign that the ideology of sensibility did *not* accurately account for all of English society; for as social unrest became more frequent, the dependent masses no longer seemed "naturally" the grateful wards their governors had imagined, or at least desired.[2] Paradoxically, however, the ideology of sensibility itself contributed to this challenge from below: not only did sensibility lack theories to explain such social unrest, but its paradigms actually sanctioned the bourgeois individualism which increasingly exacerbated it.

A study of the ideology of sensibility, its power and its gradual decline, is essential to our understanding of one underprivileged subgroup within the dominant class.[3] For with the gradual erosion of paternalism and the simultaneous, rapid growth of agrarian, then industrial capitalism, "the Third Estate of the Third Estate," as one French pamphleteer called women, also began to experience a loosening of the mortar which had solidified its place within the traditional order. The challenge posed to sensibility, in fact, had a profounder significance for women than for any other group. For although the ideology rationalized the economic and political powerlessness of women, it also constituted the basis for their peculiar but undeniable power. In the course of the eighteenth century, sentimental virtues were increasingly identified as feminine virtues, until, by the end of the century, authors of conduct books for "women of rank and fortune" consistently described women's "natural" characteristics as a variation of sentimentalism: "the most amiable tendencies and affections implanted in human nature, of modesty, of delicacy, of sympathizing sensibility, of prompt active benevolence, of warmth and tenderness of attachment."[4] According to Rousseau and his numerous followers, these feminine qualities compensated for the "inequality of man-made laws" by assigning women very specific social responsibilities, and thereby assuring them of very specific powers.[5] The anonymous conduct book writer already quoted describes women's unique contributions to social stability and happiness as follows:

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[2] For discussions of the social turmoil of the late eighteenth century and the ongoing resistance of urban and rural poor to the values of paternalism, see Douglas Hay, "Property, Authority, and Criminal Law," Peter Linebaugh, "The Tyburn Riot Against the Surgeons," and E. P. Thompson, "The Crime of Anonymity," in *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Hay *et al.* (New York: Random House, 1975; Pantheon Books), pp. 17-118, 255-308. For a discussion of the challenge posed to paternalism by the development of a class society, see Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969; paper edition, 1972), pp. 176-217.

[3] Although some of the values and attitudes of middle and upper middle class women were emulated by lower classes, my discussion of the values of sensibility is confined to those middle class women who largely made up the female reading public.

> First. In contributing daily and hourly to the comfort of husbands, of parents, of brothers and sisters, and of other relations and connections, in the intercourse of domestic life, under every vicissitude of sickness and health, of joy and affliction.
>
> Secondly. In forming and improving the general manners, dispositions, and conduct of the other sex, by society and example.
>
> Thirdly. In modelling the human mind during the early stages of its growth, and fixing, while it is yet ductile, its growing principle of action; children of either sex being, in general, under maternal tuition during their childhood, and girls until they become women.[6]

From our perspective, we can see that the most crucial "power" of middle class women actually resided in their ability to preserve in the home the sentimental values and behavior traditionally associated with paternalistic society—even as developments in the "real world," made up of marketplace and mob, challenged those values and that behavior.[7] By providing men a retreat from "the sordid occupations and degrading profits of trade,"[8] an arena where feminine charm could momentarily humanize the aggressive, individualistic energies necessary to material success, women were able to perpetuate the comforting illusion that the harmonious world some poets already viewed with nostalgia was not, in fact, yet lost. Not incidentally, however, by keeping the theatre of humane values separate from materialistic activity, this illusion inadvertently contributed to the eventual success of the marketplace values it appeared to counteract.

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[4] *The Female Aegis, Or, the Duties of Woman from Childhood to Old Age, and in Most Situations of Life, Exemplified* (London: Sampson Low, 1798; rpt. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1974), p. 9.

[5] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile*, trans. Barbara Foxley (1762; New York: Dutton, 1911), p. 324.

[6] *Female Aegis*, pp. 3-4.

[7] See Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 64-74.

It is not surprising that at the end of the eighteenth century the debate about woman's proper place and her peculiar power intensified, for as the paternalistic system began to lose its hegemony, women sensed the imminent destruction of both their dependent status *and* their power. Their response, predictably, was a deeply divided one. Mary Wollstonecraft, insisting that women's dependence was not "natural" but acquired, exhorted her sisters to protect themselves against the threat she already perceived by learning new habits of genuine strength:

> I wish to persuade women to endeavor to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are almost synonomous with epithets of weakness, and that those beings who are only the objects of pity and that kind of love, which has been termed its sister, will soon become objects of contempt.[9]

In reply, Hannah More reasserted Rosseau's argument from innate characteristics. The "original marks of difference stamped by the hand of the Creator," More reminded women, dictated their "natural," their "proper," and therefore their "right" place, and to defy this order would not only pervert the natural law but invite absolute powerlessness.

> Is it not then more wise as well as more honorable to move contentedly in the plain path which Providence has obviously marked out to the sex, and in which custom has for the most part rationally confirmed them, rather than to stray awkwardly, unbecomingly, and unsuccessfully, in a forbidden road? to be the lawful possessors of a lesser domestic terri-

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[8] *Female Aegis*, p. 30.

[9] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (1792; New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1967), p. 34.

> tory, rather than the turbulent usurpers of a wider foreign empire? to be good originals, rather than bad imitators? to be the best thing of one's kind, rather than an inferior thing even if it were of an higher kind? to be excellent women rather than indifferent men? [10]

Mary Wollstonecraft and Hannah More, in their polemical zest, take extreme and particularly clear positions. In the fiction written (and read) during this period by middle class women, these two antithetical attitudes more frequently lie side by side, causing competing tendencies which rupture the bland optimism their narrators assert. The novels of Ann Radcliffe, "the Great Enchantress," provide a particularly good example of the tensions the challenge to paternalism and its values caused such women, for in her romances Radcliffe investigates specifically the paradoxical role sensibility plays in simultaneously restricting women and providing them power and an arena for action. Moreover, in the process of her investigation, Radcliffe uncovers the root cause of the late eighteenth-century ideological turmoil, the economic aggressiveness currently victimizing defenseless women of sensibility. But despite her penetrating insight, Radcliffe does not abandon sentimental values; instead, she retreats from the terrifying implications of her discovery and simply dismisses the threat sentimentalism cannot combat. Rather than proposing an alternative to paternalistic society and its values, she merely reasserts an idealized—and insulated—paternalism and relegates the issues she cannot resolve to the background of her narrative. Thus, in Radcliffe's romances, we have an excellent example of an ideology *in practice*, a testing of its images and values by one member of that class which had most at stake in it. In the tonal and structural dissonances, the competing ideas which characterize even Radcliffe's most successful novel, we see the conflicts within the ideology realized—acted out, as it were, in one woman's attempt to imaginatively resolve the instability that threatened her. And in her return to the very values she has questioned, we see the way in which her investment in these values delimited the range of her response.

"Sensibility" and "sentiments" were understood in the eighteenth century to be the products of that innate moral faculty Shaftesbury postulated in his *Characteristics* (1711). During most of the century, "sensibility" embraced both consciousness—the ability to feel strongly—and conscience—the capacity for *rational* feeling.[11] The values associated with sensibility were therefore moral (benevolence, generosity) as well as aesthetic (sensitivity, responsiveness), and the interdependence of these categories helps explain how sensibility could constitute the foundation for an ethical as well as an aesthetic theory: virtue was held to be its own reward because generous behavior automatically returned aesthetic pleasure. Shaftesbury's proposal that man possessed "natural affections," that his benevolence was innate, was one of many attempts to answer that persistent eighteenth-century question of how legitimate self-interest could be linked to the desire for social good. But while the proposals of several of Shaftesbury's early followers, most notably Francis Hutcheson and Alexander Gerard, continue his emphasis that the moral gesture was simply a natural response of an innate faculty, other moral theorists subjected this moral sense to a more searching analysis. In particular, David Hume, in *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-1740), and Adam Smith, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), advanced explanations that prepared the way for more secular and less disinterested theories of man's generosity.

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[10] Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education with a View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune*, 2 vols. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1799), 2: 23.

David Hume, for example, makes sympathy the basis for all moral responses, but he goes on to explain that sympathy causes pleasure because through it we perceive how the "good of mankind" advances our *own* welfare. According to Hume, sympathy

> produces our sentiment of morals in all the artificial virtues. From thence we may presume, that it also gives rise to many of the other virtues; and that qualities acquire our approba-

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[11] In his *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976), Raymond Williams explains that the word *sensibility* was, throughout the eighteenth century, informed by its root affiliation with *sensible* and that it was closely associated with both *sentimental* and *sentiments*. "The significant development in 'sense' was the extension from a process to a particular kind of product: 'sense' as good sense, good judgment, from which the predominant modern meaning of *sensible* was to be derived.... *Sensibility* in its C 18 uses ranged from a use much like that of modern 'awareness' (not only 'consciousness' but 'conscience') to a strong form of what the word appears literally to mean, the ability to feel.... The association [of *sentimental*] with *sensibility* was then close: a conscious openness to feelings, and also a conscious consumption of feelings." See *Keywords*, pp. 235-38. I use *sensibility* and *sentimentalism* interchangeably.

> tion, because of their tendency to the good of mankind.... We have no such extensive concern for society but from sympathy; and consequently, 'tis that principle, which takes us so far out of ourselves, as to give us the same pleasure or uneasiness in the characters of others, as if they had a tendency to our own advantage or loss.[12]

Hume openly acknowledges that " men are, in a great measure, govern'd by interest, and that even when they extend their concern beyond themselves, 'tis not to any great distance." [13] Only the knowledge that one's individual interest will ultimately be advanced by justice causes man to desire government and practice self-control. Hume, in other words, does not assume that man is naturally benevolent—only that his natural self-interest can be turned to benevolence as sympathy convinces him that his welfare is intimately connected with others'.[14]

Adam Smith agrees with Hume's notion that sympathy is the basis of moral action, but in expanding this idea to claim that *all* desires originate in the desire for sympathy itself, Smith suggests the extent to which the values of sensibility can be made to accommodate the practices of marketplace competition. For Smith insists that even ambition and the desire for " place " spring from man's " regard to the sentiments of mankind," his desire " to be observed, to be attended to, to be taken notice of with sympathy, complacency, and approbation." [15]

> It is the vanity, not the ease, or the pleasure, which interests us. But vanity is always founded upon the belief of our being the object of attention and approbation. The rich man glories in his riches, because he feels that they naturally draw upon him the attention of the world, and that mankind are disposed to go aong with him in all those aggreable emotions with which the advantages of his situation so readily inspire him. At the thought of this his heart seems to swell and dilate itself

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[12] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Ernest C. Mossner (1739 and 1740; Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969), pp. 628-29, 630.

[13] *Treatise*, pp. 385-86.

[14] "In the *execution* and *decision* of justice, men acquire a security against each others weakness and passion, as well as against their own, and under shelter of the governors, begin to taste at ease the sweets of society and mutual assistance." *Treatise*, p. 589.

[15] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments; or, An Essay Towards an Analysis of the Principles by Which Men Naturally Judge Concerning the Conduct and Character, First of Their Neighbours, and Afterwards of Themselves* (1759; London: Henry G. Bohn, 1861), pp. 70-72.

> within him, and he is fonder of his wealth, upon this account, than for all the other advantages it procures him.[16]

Although Smith postulates an internal "impartial spectator" to assure the morality of man's actions, in claiming that man's fundamental desire urges him to improve his material well-being, Smith anchors the rationale for laissez-faire competition in the theory of moral sentiments itself. In his *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Smith extends this assumption to its logical conclusion, for his explanation that individual and national enrichment stroll hand-in-hand in the healthy glow of unregulated competition suggests that in a free market economy many men simply strive simultaneously, "naturally," for the essentially non-economic goal of universal respect.[17]

Eighteenth-century poetic formulations of the sentimental virtues almost always deny this hospitality to material desire or individualistic competition. But with the wisdom of hindsight, we can see that the ideology of sensibility helped underwrite both laissez-faire capitalism and the self-regulating society the English bourgeoisie desired. Its explanation of human behavior legitimized the bourgeoisie's desire for a weak central government, while its hierarchy of values helped control potentially disruptive religious and political differences. Moreover, as Albert Kuhn has suggested, the man who cultivated sentimental virtues within his position of power also created the impression of aristocratic grace: "he who acquired it [sensibility] was enobled, and was enobling in his society."[18] We should not forget, of course, that these values also promoted very real beneficial effects: in advocating humanitarian treatment of the poor, a liberal attitude toward the American revolution, and compassion for enslaved Negroes, sensibility contributed to most of the genuinely liberal accomplishments of the period. But sentimental values provided only the rationale, never the power for social or political action. Sentimental virtues, which Edmund Burke called the "softer virtues," may have helped control or humanize aggression and energy, but by definition, the genuine creature of sensibility was self-effacing and could only influence action indirectly. Thus, however "amiable," the true practitioner of sensibility was essentially passive, dependent, inferior. In fact, cultivating sensibility without an underlying foundation of political or economic power effectively contributed to keep its practitioner weak.[19]

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[16] *Moral Sentiments*, p. 71.

[17] See Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests, Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 100-13.

[18] Albert J. Kuhn, "Introduction" to *Three Sentimental Novels* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, Inc., 1970), p. vi.

Because women were considered the primary vessels of the sentimental virtues, and because these virtues constituted virtually their only source of social power, women's prescriptive literature generally assumed a cautionary tone, advocating acceptance of limitations but celebrating the indirect power of influence and love. In her poem "Sensibility" (1782), for example, Hannah More voiced many of the feminine commonplaces, assuring her readers that self-denial itself was a significant social contribution.

> To bless mankind with tides of flowing wealth,
> With rank to grace them, or to crown with health,
> Our little lot denies; yet lib'ral still,
> Heaven gives its counterpoise to every ill;
> Nor let us murmer at our stinted powers,
> When kindness, love, and concord may be ours.
> . . . .
> The mild forbearance at a brother's fault,
> The angry word suppress'd, the taunting thought;
> Subduing and subdued, the petty strife,
> Which clouds the colour of domestic life;
> The sober comfort, all the peace which springs
> From the large aggregate of little things;
> On these small cares of daughter, wife, or friend,
> The almost sacred joys of home depend:
> There, Sensibility, thou best may'st reign,
> Home is thy true legitimate domain.[20]

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[19] When Edmund Burke discusses the "softer virtues" ("easiness of temper, compassion, kindness and liberality"), he makes it clear that these qualities, though more "amiable," are "inferior in dignity" to the "sublime" virtues such as "fortitude, justice, wisdom, and the like." See *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757; Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1968), pp. 110-11. It is also clear from Burke's entire discussion of the "beautiful" that he associates these charming but decidedly inferior virtues with women and womanly behavior. A man could also cultivate sentimental virtues and sensibility (as Valancourt and du Pont do) but, as Sterne's Yorick proves, that man will incur feminine weakness and vulnerability along with feminine feeling.

[20] Hannah More, "Sensibility: An Epistle to the Honorable Mrs. Boscawen," in *The Works of Hannah More*, 7 vols. (London: H. Fisher, R. Fisher, & P. Jackson, 1834), 5: 338-39.

More's climactic celebration of the home points up that characteristic tendency, increasingly prevalent in the last decades of the century, to relegate sentimental virtues to the "woman's sphere." There, these virtues could still exercise their ameliorative effect, as women provided a calm, still center to the otherwise turbulent life of the enterprising bread-winner, and preserved the valuable illusion of stability and continuity even after political and social turmoil undermined that ideal. A woman might be forbidden to own property in her own right, to sue for divorce, or even to visit her children in the wake of a separation, but in the home she embodied and superintended the sentimental virtues and thus the values of a social system already under fire.

In England as abroad, the event which brought the basic assumptions of the sentimental ideology into the range of conservative critics was not increased capitalistic activity or even mob unrest but the outbreak of the French Revolution.[21] While Thomas Paine, spokesman for those liberal political theories of enlightenment reason so dependent upon the assumptions of sensibility, returned to the argument for "natural" virtue to justify "natural rights,"[22] Edmund Burke exposed the contradiction always implicit in the marriage of laissez-faire economics with sentimental morality. Although Burke was primarily arguing against unrestrained reason, in his discussion of the consequences of misplaced confidence in man's nature, he also pointed out that the self-interest the moral philosophers had already acknowledged as compatible with benevolence could easily become that "lust of selfish will" which was currently threatening Church property and social stability. One of Burke's many telling insights was that if one accepts the possibility that virtue is not disinterested, the sentimental rationalization collapses from within. "Self-love and Social" are *not* necessarily the same in the absence of external regulation; the goal of material well-being may be cloaked with a rationale based on sympathy, but the means of acquiring it and its social consequences may be neither virtuous, benevolent, nor humane.

Burke does not abandon the sentimental virtues; he simply insists that sentiments, like reason, must be regulated by an external authority. Man's natural self-interest must be closely governed by those "just principles" institutionalized in "civil society" so that this sentiment will not erupt into passionate, materialistic desire. According to Burke, only government can protect men—and women—from what he believes would be the inevitable, terrifying result of unregulated feeling: "a revolution in sentiments, manners, and moral opinions." Burke's dramatic presentation of the French Queen, "the morning-star" of sentimental virtues, roused from her bed, forced "to fly almost naked" from the poignards of "cruel ruffians and assassins," is his nightmare of the social consequences of sensibility loosed, allowed to grow into avaricious passion.[23]

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[21] This fact helps explain why most critics of the sentimental ideology, as Burke, for example, did not turn their critique of liberal politics to economic laissez-faire activities at home. Burke, in fact, supported liberal economic policies in England. See his *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity* (1795).

[22] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* and Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man* (1790; 1791; Garden City: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1973), p. 350.

II

The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794) may be seen as a middle class woman's version of Burke's revealing nightmare. Like Burke, Radcliffe perceives the viper of passion sensibility nurses within its breast; remarkably, she even recognizes its economic component. But seeing the crisis in "sentiments, manners, and moral opinions" from inside, as it were, from the perspective of its most likely victim, Radcliffe presents a very different vision of the causes and consequences of Burke's idealized feminine terror. Dramatizing the internal instability of sentimentalism as well as its vulnerability to avarice, Radcliffe explores in detail a woman's psychological responses to the enemy sensibility has bred. But rather than proposing, as Burke does, a paradigm of institutional control, Radcliffe focuses on the moment at which the institutional and familial guardians of paternalistic society simply disappear. And in the wake of that disappearance she sees, clearly if reluctantly, the viper of unleashed passion emerge.

Even though Radcliffe claims that *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is set in sixteenth-century France, the psychological situation she dramatizes belongs to late eighteenth-century England and to the ideological complexities I have been describing. Only distancing the story, in fact, permits Radcliffe to unmask the implicit threat sensibility poses without challenging its contemporary importance. For, even the limited arena of power sensibility provides women is too valuable for Radcliffe to jeopardize. Thus, by distancing the story Radcliffe prepares from the beginning to displace the threat, to return the sentimental virtues to their admittedly embattled throne.

[23] *Reflections*, pp. 84-89, 111.

In *The Mysteries*, sensibility first helps to establish the stability of that ideal, paternalistic society described in Volume One. There, within a series of protective enclosures—the chateau of La Vallée and her father's care—Emily St. Aubert is able to cultivate, then indulge sentimental virtues—a quick responsiveness to nature and an unreflecting generosity to others. Radcliffe clearly believes that these virtues are valuable, for, initially at least, she sets them up as a counter to that lust for material gain threatening both Emily's society and her own. In Volume One, Radcliffe explicitly establishes an opposition between sentimental virtues—" tenderness, simplicity, and truth "—and their materialistic counterparts—" selfishness, dissipation, and insincerity." Only by exercising the first can one earn the true " luxury " of aesthetic gratification, as the chevalier Valancourt learns when he donates his last coins to the poor. Valancourt's enrichment is immediate: " his gay spirits danced with pleasure; every object around him appeared more interesting, or beautiful, than before." [24] Beside this, Radcliffe suggests, the " frivolous " pleasures of material wealth are artificial, cold, and unsatisfying.

In her descriptions of sensibility, Radcliffe preserves the marriage of ethical and aesthetic components we saw in earlier theories: " Virtue and taste are nearly the same," Emily's father explains, " for virtue is little more than active taste, and the most delicate affection of each combine in real love " (I, v, 49-50). But aesthetic rewards automatically follow virtuous actions only as long as sensibility operates in an environment regulated by a moral authority. Emily's youthful pleasures and Valancourt's aesthetic delight are possible only in the gentle French countryside, where " the sublime luxuries " of God's natural world always greet the questing heart. In order to be effective, sensibility needs some such external governance, for, as Radcliffe is quick to note, sensibility itself is inherently unstable: it is susceptible to " excess." And " all excess is vicious," as St. Aubert warns Emily.[25] St. Aubert's dying words convey his deep suspicion of indulged sensibility:

> " Above all, my dear Emily . . . do not indulge in the pride of fine feeling, the romantic error of amiable minds. Those, who

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[24] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho: A Romance, Interspersed with Some Pieces of Poetry*, ed. Bonamy Dobrée (1794; London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), I, v, 53. All future references to this edition will be cited in the text by volume, book, and page numbers.

[25] A common adage, even in the last decade of the century. Cf. Burke, " No excess is good." *Reflections*, p. 179.

> really possess sensibility, ought early to be taught, that it is a dangerous quality, which is continually extracting the excess of misery, or delight, from every surrounding circumstance. And, since, in our passage through this world, painful circumstances occur more frequently than pleasing ones, and since our sense of evil is, I fear, more acute than our sense of good, we become the victims of our feelings, unless we can in some degree command them." (I, vii, 79-80)

The "painful circumstances" St. Aubert describes are those anarchic situations beyond the purview of paternalistic guardians, where the feeling heart is exposed to the tyranny of others or the riot of its own excess. Emily St. Aubert soon experiences both of these dilemmas, for, when her father dies, she is exiled from her protected childhood home and taken to the city, where there is no moral protector. Instead, Emily is placed in the custody of her aunt and Signor Montoni, Italian incarnation of excess itself. Subjected to Montoni's unprincipled tyranny, Emily learns the terrible meaning of her father's words: without external protection the creature of sensibility has no power over herself or others. In the avaricious anarchy of Montoni's circle, feelings do *not* become principles, and thus the sentimental heroine is helpless before both real and imaginary villains.

Radcliffe's twofold critique of sensibility achieves its clearest articulation in the episodes that take place within Montoni's decaying Alpine retreat, the castle of Udolpho. Udolpho is the sinister inverse of La Vallée, an enclosure whose boundaries oppress rather than protect, a prison which shelters hatred rather than love, a bastille which excludes both law and moral nature itself. Within Udolpho Emily is totally helpless: Montoni dictates her confinement and her virtual isolation. But the external tyranny is, on the surface at least, less oppressive than the terror generated by Emily's own undisciplined imagination. There is, as time will tell, nothing supernatural in Udolpho's winding corridors, but there are evil agents; and Emily's overly sensitive imagination, deprived of external guides, all too readily converts the unnatural into the supernatural. Thus Radcliffe's first critique of sensibility focuses squarely on the imagination itself.

For Radcliffe, as for Adam Smith, the imagination is the faculty responsible for the aesthetic—and thus the ethical—response of sensibility. A capacious faculty, the imagination prompts the feeling heart to project itself into another's situation; by transforming the beneficiary's gratitude into the benefactor's pleasure, the imagination therefore presides over that reciprocity between virtuous actions and aesthetic rewards we have already seen. But Radcliffe insists that the imagination may also be the principle agent in victimizing its vessel, for the imagination is not inherently moral; it is merely susceptible. Only as long as Emily is protected by a moral environment can her imagination receive the divine benefits embodied in the natural world.[26] And only as long as her own feelings are calm can she trust her imagination even to extend itself outward toward that comforting landscape. Within Udolpho, Emily is persecuted by " those mysterious workings, that rouse the elements of man's nature into tempest " (II, xi, 329), and consequently her senses become " dead " to the awe-inspiring scenery outside the castle. Repeatedly during her imprisonment Emily laments the " irresistible force of circumstances over the taste and powers of the mind " (III, v, 383). In " painful circumstances " such as these, a cruel new reciprocity is established: the imagination turns back upon itself and exudes demons which feed its own excess.

The interior of Udolpho is a maze of dimly lit corridors, murky recesses, and obscure stairways. This darkness only exacerbates Emily's condition, for Udolpho's gloom completely baffles perception. In such complete obscurity the imagination is cut loose from all governing images, moral or otherwise. Aroused yet unguided, its innate susceptibility becomes an aggressive force, rushing to fill the void with its own projected images, creating, in effect, an external " reality " as idiosyncratic as the psyche itself. Just beyond the responsiveness of feeling, Radcliffe warns, there lurks this completely amoral, uncontrollable force: " the wild energy of passion, inflaming imagination, bearing down the barriers of reason and living in a world of its own " (II, xi, 329).

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[26] Before entering Udolpho, Emily's experiences with nature are decidedly religious. For example: "From the consideration of His works, her mind arose to the adoration of the Deity, in His goodness and power; wherever she turned her view, whether on the sleeping earth, or to the vast regions of space, glowing with worlds beyond the reach of human thought, the sublimity of God, and the majesty of His presence appeared. Her eyes were filled with tears of awful love and admiration; and she felt that pure devotion, superior to all the distinctions of human system, which lifts the soul above this world, and seems to expand it into a nobler nature; such devotion as can, perhaps, only be experienced, when the mind, rescued, for a moment, from the humbleness of earthly considerations, aspires to contemplate His power in the sublimity of His works, and His goodness in the infinity of His blessings." *Mysteries*, I, iv, 47-48.

Like many women novelists of this period, Radcliffe is using the spectral arena of the Gothic castle to dramatize the eruption of psychic material ordinarily controlled by the inhibitions of bourgeois society.[27] It is revealing that Radcliffe explicitly links this " energy " with " passion," for Emily's response, like those of her numerous sisters, enacts what we now think of as the see-saw of liberated desire and repression. Vacillating between curiosity and fear, Emily is bold enough to explore the castle's darkest recesses, but when she imagines a corpse "crimsoned with human blood," she retreats from confrontation by fainting. Again, she boldly lifts the forbidding veil of an ominous painting, but falls senseless to the floor before she can identify its contents. Within Udolpho, desire wrestles with dread, even though the heroine is too discreet to recognize the sexual component of her energy.

Radcliffe, however, does acknowledge the kinship between imaginative responsiveness and sexual desire. Through the character of Sister Agnes, Radcliffe suggests that, given slightly different circumstances, Emily's intense susceptibility could have taken a more destructive incarnation. Because Agnes is rumored to be Emily's real mother, her anguished cry implicates her astonished listener:

> " Sister! beware of the first indulgence of the passions; beware of the first! Their course, if not checked then, is rapid—their force is uncontroulable—they lead us we know not whither—they lead us perhaps to the commission of crimes, for which whole years of prayer and penitence cannot atone! —Such may be the force of even a single passion, that it overcomes every other, and sears up every other approach to the heart. Possessing us like a fiend, it leads us on to the acts of a fiend, making us insensible to pity and to conscience."
>
> (IV, xvi, 646)

The crime of Sister Agnes, born the Lady Laurentini, was giving in to passion, agreeing to become the mistress of the Marquis de Villeroi. In Radcliffe's world, the devastation Agnes describes inevitably follows such liberation of feminine feeling, for, as Patricia Meyer Spacks has noted, " to submit to passion means to abandon the controls by which women even more than men—given their social conditions—must live."[28] Abandoning the "controls," those moral feelings internalized as "principles," catapults a woman into the anarchy of sexual desire and tears from her the last remnants of her social power, even her identity. This, then, is at the heart of Radcliffe's critique of sensibility's affinity to "excess": the amoral energy beyond responsiveness is the "fiend" of sexual desire, whose crimes neither prayers nor regrets can undo.

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[27] See especially Robert Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 72-78, and Norman N. Holland and Leona F. Sherman, " Gothic Possibilities," *New Literary History*, 8 (1977), 279-94.

Despite her undeniable responsiveness, however, Emily's curiosity never becomes full-fledged sexual desire—largely because Radcliffe presides over her situation. For Radcliffe does not stop with uncovering the internal instability of sensibility; beyond a woman's natural susceptibility to passion Radcliffe intuits an even more threatening fiend. Sensibility *is* dangerous, as Emily's hysteria shows, because it encourages imaginative and libidinal excesses; but its more telling liability resides in its inability to resist the masculine version of desire—the lust of unregulated avarice.[29]

For most of the two central volumes of *The Mysteries*, Emily's external circumstances are almost completely controlled by Montoni. The Italian has the power to tyrannize her helpless virtue because his position is protected by law and, more importantly, because his energy is a purely aggressive force, immune to the socializing reciprocity of sensibility.

> Delighting in the tumult and in the struggles of life, he was equally a stranger to pity and to fear; his very courage was a sort of animal ferocity; not the noble impulse of a principle, such as inspirits the mind against the oppressor, in the cause of the oppressed; but a constitutional hardiness of nerve, that cannot feel, and that, therefore, cannot fear. (III, ii, 358)

Montoni's calculating passion is the most powerful force Radcliffe dramatizes in *The Mysteries*, for his purely materialistic appetite scorns the aesthetic rewards of sensibility. Through her depiction of Montoni and in the network of economic themes centering on him, Radcliffe delivers her second, and most telling, critique of sensibility: *this* is the viper its assumptions have allowed—the masculine passion of unregulated, individualistic, avaricious desire. This monster operates wholly outside the moral universe, and sensibility's amiable "principles" will never take root in its icy heart. The surfacing of this force as a figure in Radcliffe's fiction attests to her remarkable ability to penetrate the surface of the sentimental ideology, to see through to its economic base. Yet even as she unmasks the hideous incarnation of capitalistic energy she returns to the very values she has just proved inadequate. For Radcliffe can imagine no force apart from sensibility's feminine principles to control this masculine force.

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[28] Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Imagining a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1976), p. 85.

[29] Nelson C. Smith, in his article "Sense, Sensibility and Ann Radcliffe," (*Studies in English Literature*, 13 [1973], 577), also observes that Radcliffe was critical of sensibility, "Far from being an advocate of sensibility, she, like Jane Austen two decades later, shows its weakness and flaws." But Smith, and most of the critics who have followed him, asserts that the cure for indulged sensibility is simply a "return to reason." Radcliffe's insight that sensibility is intimately connected to sexual and avaricious passion clearly makes such a solution, while attractive, impossible.

In what Robert Kiely has called "the male world of Udolpho,"[30] the most significant confrontation is that between Emily's sentimental virtues and Montoni's materialistic desire. Money, in fact, lurks behind every turn of *The Mysteries*' plot. Emily's hysteria within Udolpho is ultimately a consequence of her legal dependence on Montoni; as an orphan, she is penniless and powerless; as a female she has no legal rights. Her immediate poverty, however, will soon be replaced by comparative wealth, for upon coming of age Emily stands to inherit several valuable estates in Gascony. This situation—not sexual desire—motivates Montoni's original interest in Emily: as an imminent heiress, Emily is a potentially valuable commodity on the marriage market, and, quite simply, Montoni needs Emily's estates to pay off his gambling debts. Emily is shocked to learn the truth from Count Morano, her would-be purchaser: "'You hear, that Montoni is a villain,' exclaimed Morano with vehemence,—'a villain who would have sold you to my love! ... Emily! he has no principle, when interest, or ambition leads'" (II, vi, 262). Morano himself, although he seems to Emily to pose a sexual threat, is also motivated by materialistic desire. "A man of ruined fortune," Morano has plotted to defraud Montoni of Emily's estates. In fact, it was the discovery of this design that prompted Montoni to imprison Emily in Udolpho in the first place (II, vii, 273-74).

In a society in which a single woman's value is intimately tied to both sexual purity and endowed property, the consequences of sexual and economic exploitation are effectively identical: either would curtail

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[30] *The Romantic Novel*, p. 75.

Emily's chance of attaining social identity through the only avenue open to her—marriage. But Radcliffe depicts masculine avarice as more powerful than lust because she recognizes that the "unfeeling" energy Montoni embodies is actually a denial of feeling. It therefore threatens to undermine the entire system of social values that protects the vulnerable woman.[31] Montoni's passion "entirely supplie[s] the place of principles" (III, viii, 435), and once such feminine, sentimental principles as sensitivity, responsiveness, decorum and generosity are no longer also considered "manly" there will be no governing code to socialize aggressive energy. Radcliffe diagrams this lesson explicitly in Valancourt's experience in Paris. There, despondent over his separation from Emily, the susceptible young man falls prey to the charms of salons and the temptations of the gaming table. Artificial beauties and the lure of a quick fortune conspire "to dazzle his imagination, and re-animate his spirits," and the passion he develops for gambling displaces his feeling for Emily, leads him into debt, and culminates in imprisonment. Only when incarcerated—protected, that is, from his own passion—can Valancourt benefit from Emily's socializing image:

> In the solitude of his prison, Valancourt had leisure for reflection, and cause for repentance; here, too, the image of Emily, which, amidst the dissipation of the city had been obscured, but never obliterated from his heart, revived with all the charms of innocence and beauty, to reproach him for having sacrificed his happiness and debased his talents by pursuits, which his nobler faculties would formerly have taught him to consider were as tasteless as they were degrading. (IV, xv, 652)

If Valancourt's passion had been left to pursue its natural course, the chevalier's "nobler faculties" would presumably have become as unresponsive as Montoni's. And without "taste" to principle his behavior, Valancourt's desire for Emily would hardly have remained virtuous. In this lesson, Radcliffe implies that the feminine values of sensibility *could* socialize masculine energy—*if* there were some sure way to enforce them, if, in other words, there were some authority strong enough to keep masculine energy from becoming Montoni's fatal power.

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[31] It is interesting to note here the reversal in priorities that has occurred since Richardson's *Clarissa.* In the earlier novel, the threat to Clarissa's virginity was foregrounded and the economic "rape" by the aristocrat Lovelace was subordinated. Richardson's Christian plot focuses specifically on the spiritual dimension of the heroine's physical fall. For Radcliffe, on the other hand, otherworldly consolation is intimately linked to earthly conditions; without sufficient money to protect herself, Emily's physical integrity would always be in danger. Thus Radcliffe foregrounds the economic threat as endangering both sexual *and* spiritual security.

III

The "solution" Radcliffe offers in Valancourt's story obviously does not resolve the problem of Montoni or his materialistic desire. For the sentimental ideology, delegating responsibility for moral action to the individual's own aesthetic taste, provides for no institutional watchman to discipline the "unprincipled" man. In fact, the absence of this provision virtually invites such calculating fiends to prey on sensibility's defenseless creatures. But even more frightening is the possibility that, in yoking self-interest to the desire for sympathy, sensibility has actually assisted in the birth of this beast. Hydra-like, its antithesis emerges from the sentimental ideology, promising to devour it as it grows.

Radcliffe's insight that economic forces underlie the challenge to feminine values is, therefore, potentially subversive to those values themselves. But Radcliffe does not pursue this insight to its logical conclusion. For, although by the 1790's the social and ideological revolution Burke had feared was clearly underway, compelling Radcliffe to respond to sensibility's limitations, the attendant possibility of complete social and ethical chaos was simply too disturbing for Radcliffe—or her largely middle class female audience—to confront.[32] Rather than sacrifice the sentimental virtues, therefore, Radcliffe tries to manage these anxieties by imaginatively insulating the ideology's feminine virtues from the masculine threat of material self-interest. Radcliffe insists, first of all, that, despite all evidence, passion *can* be governed by principles. And, in order to insure their victory, she simply abolishes the "painful circumstances" that undermined their power. By taking Emily out of Udolpho, restoring her to nature's inspiring influence and to a moral, paternalistic society, Radcliffe is able to substitute ethical dilemmas for the unresolvable threat of avarice and to return the plot complication to a harmless encounter between virtue and error. Radcliffe's strategies are conspicuous, and more than anything, they call attention to the difficulties materialism posed for sentimental values, but her very insistence attests to her investment in saving the sentimental ideology from itself.

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[32] Radcliffe's was not, of course, the only possible fictional response to this situation. Other middle class women novelists, most notably Mary Wollstonecraft, explicitly repudiated both the sentimental ideology and the emergent capitalism that threatened it. But we should remember that Radcliffe's romances found a much larger audience than did Wollstonecraft's *Maria* or *Mary*—no doubt because Radcliffe voiced the fears and fantasies of a majority of the female reading public.

The first of these substitutions occurs even before Emily is liberated from Udolpho. Having imagined that the recurring sound of a French ballad must mean that Valancourt is imprisoned in the castle, Emily is shocked senseless to discover that the hidden singer, into whose arms she has thrown herself, is a complete stranger. This dilemma, of course, is one which sentimental principles *can* resolve. Upon regaining consciousness, Emily assures Monsieur du Pont that she mistook him for someone else and appeals to his virtue to pardon her indecorous behavior. Emily is correct in judging du Pont to be a harmless creature of sensibility like herself. Du Pont is so responsive, in fact, that his impassioned apology brings Montoni's ruffians crashing into their secluded hiding place.

Emily escapes from Udolpho with surprisingly little trouble, given Montoni's previous absolute power. But she must still endure two important dilemmas which take the place of and, by implication, are meant to resolve the anxieties generated within Udolpho. First, rumors of Valancourt's behavior in Paris endanger Emily's future happiness; then the suggestion that her beloved father might have nursed an illicit affection threatens to undermine the authority of her cherished sentimental education. Radcliffe invests these possibilities with enormous thematic and emotional significance, for Valancourt's passion for gambling and St. Aubert's promiscuity seem to be embryonic versions of the destructive energy Montoni embodies. By dramatizing the socialization of passion—or denying its presence altogether—in these good characters, Radcliffe simultaneously constructs a model of how excess can be contained and attempts to negate those disturbing suggestions Montoni aroused.

Valancourt's rehabilitation, which I have already described, demonstrates Radcliffe's strategy most clearly. By permitting him to be infected by and then cured of the same "unnatural," avaricious passion that characterizes Montoni, Radcliffe offers the possibility that this disruptive force *can* be controlled—*if* it could remain sufficiently responsive to the aesthetically gratifying principles of feminine virtue. With some kind of infallible external control, perhaps even the male, possessed of the more dangerous energy, could be taught to internalize virtue, to attune his desires to the principles dictated by his "nobler faculties."

Neither Emily nor the reader learns of Valancourt's reformation until very late in the narrative, however, for Radcliffe uses this uncertainty to demonstrate the wisdom of St. Aubert. Emily believes Valancourt has fallen; therefore she must choose between the restraint advocated by her father and the special pleading of her own desire. When she resolutely follows her father's advice, subduing her implicitly sexual passion by means of principled feeling, she proves herself capable of managing her own sensibility—in such strictly benign circumstances, of course. Radcliffe immediately rewards Emily with both the "rational happiness" of marriage and the knowledge that St. Aubert's loved one was, appropriately, his own sister.

Radcliffe completes her strategy of substitution by sustaining the mystery of Valancourt's fall and the identity of St. Aubert's other love for almost 500 pages. Just as the perceptual obscurity of Udolpho jeopardized Emily's self-command, so the opaqueness of ignorance threatens her ethical security. By having Emily overcome the second trial, Radcliffe attempts to eradicate the ominous implications of the first. Radcliffe's notorious revelations contribute to this same strategy: just as time can erase the apparent moral failings of Valancourt and St. Aubert, so the narrator can provide natural explanations for most of Udolpho's apparently supernatural horrors. Even if these explanations do not successfully offset the anxieties Udolpho and Montoni originally generated, Radcliffe clearly wants to create the *effect* of having resolved the ideological complexities by working through the less intractible, newly centered moral problems. Radcliffe disposes of the remaining loose ends with equal ease: Montoni is arrested and dies in prison, mysteriously and offstage (presumably, a victim of evil's natural attribution), Emily regains her father's and her aunt's estates, Valancourt's brother gives him entail to his family's "rich domain," and Udolpho passes into the possession of a female relative—thus, we assume, into socializing control.

Not surprisingly, the new order ushered in at the end of the romance simply restores the traditional, paternalistic community of Emily's childhood, with the social contract of marriage now presiding in St. Aubert's place. Marriage sanctifies and socializes the desires of Emily and Valancourt and they retire to Emily's reclaimed ancestral estate, to bask happily ever after in the glow of virtue rewarded. The undisputed possession of property protects them from the temptations of avaricious desire, and perfect reciprocity is reestablished between the aesthetic charms of moral nature and the ethical responses of a sympathetic, but principled heart. Those subversive traces of sexual and materialistic passion engendered in Udolpho might almost vanish in the mist of this protective, pastoral harmony. In the last paragraphs of the novel, Radcliffe cannot help but applaud her artful contrivance:

> O! how joyful it is to tell of happiness, such as that of Valancourt and Emily; to relate, that, after suffering under the oppression of the vicious and the disdain of the weak, they were, at length, restored to each other—to the beloved landscapes of their native country,—to the securest felicity of this life, that of aspiring to moral and labouring for intellectual improvement—to the pleasures of an enlightened society, and to the exercise of the benevolence, which had always animated their hearts; while the bowers of La Vallée became, once more, the retreat of goodness, wisdom and domestic blessedness! (IV, xix, 672)

The aura of fantasy that enchants this final arrangement suggests that it does *not* constitute a convincing solution to the problem of how virtue is to be protected from internal or external threats. Radcliffe dramatizes no "enlightened society" to offset the power of Montoni's tyranny, she has emphatically shown this harmony not to be "secure," and the retreat to the domestic comforts of La Vallée hardly illuminates the darkness of the castle Emily has left behind. The anxieties generated by Montoni's avarice simply continue to haunt the formulaic resolution Radcliffe asserts. Having admitted the genuine spectre of aggressive, individualistic energy into her fiction, Radcliffe cannot effectively disarm its threat. Having uncovered the material forces which actually endanger the sentimental ideology, she cannot successfully contain their subversive threats without abandoning those sentimental values she cherishes. The dissatisfaction registered by generations of readers testifies to the discrepancy between the complexities Radcliffe has raised and the simplistic solution she proposes. "Curiosity," as Coleridge remarked of *The Mysteries*, "is raised oftener than it is gratified; or rather, it is raised so high that no adequate gratification can be given it."[33]

One point still needs to be made. For despite the fact that Radcliffe dramatizes, in no uncertain terms, the inherent liabilities of the sentimental ideology, she nevertheless suggests that there is a positive as well as a defensive reason for preserving feminine values. Even at the moment of Emily's greatest victimage, within the oppressive walls of Udolpho, Radcliffe attributes to her a very real—if indirect—power. Much of the interest of the romance centers, in fact, on how Emily will be able to exercise this power given the extremity of her "painful circumstances."[34] Radcliffe postpones Emily's marriage to Valancourt, promised early in Volume One, not primarily so that the young chevalier can prove himself or make his fortune, but so that the young woman can have an opportunity to test her power, to enjoy an intense (if harrowing) adventure before settling into her "proper sphere." Udolpho obviously poses unexpected psychological complexities for Emily, but it also offers her this chance to exercise an ingenuity which the rules of propriety will soon deny her. Exploring the labyrinthine corridors virtually at will, penetrating into secret passageways and eavesdropping on Montoni's midnight revels, Emily answers the Italian's blatant bravado with a quiet resourcefulness that eventually enables her to elude him. Even at her moment of greatest danger, when Montoni demands the transfer of her ancestral estates, the girl demonstrates a remarkable power in denying him his desires. The roots of her strength lie in that particularly feminine gesture of passive aggression, but Montoni's frustration is no less for the delicacy of his antagonist.

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[33] S. T. Coleridge, "Review of *The Mysteries of Udolpho, A Romance*," in *Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism*, ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1936), p. 357.

Thus we can see in *The Mysteries* that Radcliffe affirms the sentimental values at least partly because they do provide women power, even if it is only the indirect or negative power of influence and resistance. By elevating women's dependent position, their victimage, to the status of myth, Radcliffe is even able to suggest a degree of heroism in these gestures. Emily's ability to frustrate Montoni's designs at least retards, if not actually undermines, his triumph, and in so doing she proves an important agent in protecting—in the fiction—the status quo against the threat of encroaching materialism. But, significantly, Radcliffe allows Emily such extraordinary power only within Udolpho. After her escape Emily returns to a more typical position of dependence, ward first of du Pont, then of the father-surrogate Count de Villefort, then of the exonerated Valancourt. In the realm of bandetti and political intrigue outside the castle men once more take the intiative, and the tension and complexity of the narrative diminish proportionately. Like Emily, Radcliffe is only willing to elaborate the feminine potential for power within definite bounds; only the extremity of Udolpho's oppression sanctions such unorthodox fantasies of resistance become heroism. Radcliffe's final moralistic apologia returns her romantic dreams to their appropriate, humble proportion:

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[34] Robert Kiely also discusses this point. See *The Romantic Novel*, p. 73.

> And, if the weak hand, that has recorded this tale, has, by its scenes, beguiled the mourner of one hour of sorrow, or, by its moral, taught him to sustain it—the effort, however humble, has not been vain, nor is the writer unrewarded.
>
> (III, xviii, 672)

The legacy Ann Radcliffe bequeathes us is neither a singleminded call to abandon the sentimental values nor a wholehearted endorsement of them. Rather, hers is a complex, even contradictory response which reveals, most significantly, the power of sentimentalism and the competing tendencies within the ideology. Her romance reminds us that sensibility was not just a minor literary movement but a set of values and images which legitimized economic and political behavior as well; and that it, like any system of values, was never monolithic but harbored, even nurtured, its ideological opposite. As the foundation for the decidedly ambiguous power granted women in the late eighteenth century and as one theory hospitable to capitalism before its triumph, sensibility deserves more careful attention than it has yet received.

Radcliffe's romance also reminds us that all art—even specifically non-political art—constitutes a response to material conditions and the systems of ideas they generate. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is, on the surface, merely an escapist fantasy, providing vicarious thrills for thousands of homebound, altogether proper ladies. But these fantasies announce the frustrations and desires of an important social group at an important historical moment. Responding to the threat revolutionary turmoil posed to sentimentalism, Radcliffe sees to the heart of the sentimental code by which she lives; she sees its price and its rewards; she sees its bitter economic root and its beautiful flowering in feminine virtue. Even her refusal to explore the implications of her insight is an important aspect of her response, for it tells of the shelter sentimental values offered their middle class proponents. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* reminds us, in short, that the imagination's response to reality involves testing, rejecting, and affirming values; and that in the process of creating meaning it may offer insights into changes deep in the social system itself.

J. GARY WILLIAMS*

Quentin Finally Sees Miss Rosa*

At the beginning of Chapter 6 of Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* Quentin reads half of his father's letter about Rosa Coldfield's death, then puts it down. Though the letter remains partly open on the table in front of him, and though he apparently stares fixedly at it for several hours while he and Shreve contemplate the Sutpen saga, he does not finish reading it until the novel's second-to-last page.[1] Faulkner's description of the circumstances under which Quentin finally does complete it suggests that "reading the letter" is not a simple matter of looking at and comprehending words on a page. Clearly, in the book's penultimate scene, Quentin is not in any literal sense reading his father's letter. Since the beginning of Chapter 9 Shreve and Quentin have been "in bed in the dark" (p. 360). Quentin has been staring at the rectangle of window, which gradually metamorphoses into "the once-folded sheet out of the wistaria Mississippi summer," lying in "its same curious, light, gravity-defying attitude."[2] The entire lead-up to the second half of the letter is as follows:

> "The South," Shreve said. "The South. Jesus. No wonder you folks all outlive yourselves by years and years and years." *It was becoming quite distinct; he would be able to decipher the words soon, in a moment; even almost now, now, now.*
>
> "I am older at twenty than a lot of people who have died," Quentin said.
>
> "And more people have died than have been twenty-one," Shreve said. *Now he (Quentin) could read it, could finish it*—the sloped whimsical ironic hand out of Mississippi attenuated, into the iron snow: (p. 377, my emphases)

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[1] *Absalom, Absalom!* (New York: Modern Library, 1936), pp. 173-74, p. 377. Subsequent page references following quotation in text.

[2] "...the rectangle of paper folded across the middle and now open, three quarters open, whose bulk had raised half itself by the leverage of the old crease in weightless and paradoxical levitation..." (p. 217). The letter is first mentioned at the beginning of Chapter 2, p. 31. Other references appear on pp. 207, 217-18, 238, 255, 258, and 275.

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" Reading " (or " finishing " or " deciphering ") the letter, the italicized phrases imply, is a *symbolic* act, an achievement. Apparently, for Quentin, Miss Rosa can die, be buried, and gain " *that place or bourne where the objects of the outrage and of the commiseration also are no longer ghosts but are actual people* " (p. 377) only after something else has happened, perhaps only after he has come to a particular kind of understanding of the experiences he undergoes in the book.

In the moments just before he is able to complete the letter, Quentin imagines the events of the day two or three weeks before when Rosa went out to the Sutpen mansion to bring Henry in to Jefferson and watched the house go up in flames. It is noteworthy that in this climactic, perhaps crucial scene, the focus is not on any of the central figures of the Sutpen story, but rather on Rosa, possibly the least significant character in the drama's grand sweep. As the scene goes through his mind, Quentin keeps returning to the image of Rosa struggling with the deputy and the ambulance driver. He " could see it," the narrator insists several times. He " had not been there, but he could see her, struggling and fighting like a doll in a nightmare, making no sound, foaming a little at the mouth, her face even in the sunlight lit by one last wild crimson reflection as the house collapsed and roared away " (p. 376). The ordeal which the hearing of the Sutpen story is for Quentin is not complete until he comes to " see " the extremity of Rosa's involvement in the events she partly narrates. The structuring principle of *Absalom, Absalom!* would seem to be Quentin's movement from the state of uncomprehending apathy in which he listens to Rosa in Chapters 1 and 5 to the rigid, wide-awake, " ' Nevermore of peace ' " state of mind in which he finally " sees " Rosa.[3]

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[3] Though I agree with M. E. Bradford (" Brother, Son, and Heir: The Structural Focus of *Absalom, Absalom!*," *Sewanee Review*, 78 [1970], 76-98) that Quentin's consciousness is the book's structural focus, I believe Quentin's response to Rosa is eventually more important than his response to either Thomas or Henry Sutpen. Cleanth Brooks (" The Narrative Structure of *Absalom, Absalom!*," *Georgia Review*, 29 [1975], 366-94) also cogently argues for the centrality of Quentin's role, though he sees the moment when Quentin discovers that he can't block out Henry as the climax of the novel. See also Michael Millgate's comments on the book in " 'The Firmament of Man's History': Faulkner's Treatment of the Past," *Mississippi Quarterly*, 25 (Spring 1972 Supplement), 25-35; and Estella Schoenberg, *Old Tales and Talking: Quentin Compson in William Faulkner's* Absalom, Absalom! *and Related Works* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1977), p. 106 and elsewhere.

Faulkner takes great pains in the early pages of the novel to emphasize how little Quentin is interested in Thomas Sutpen and how dimly he perceives the significance of it all to Rosa. In the first place there is the internal dialogue between the preparing-for-Harvard Quentin and the ghost-Quentin:

> *It seems that this demon—his name was Sutpen—(Colonel Sutpen)—Colonel Sutpen. Who came out of nowhere and without warning upon the land with a band of strange niggers and built a plantation—(Tore violently a plantation, Miss Rosa Coldfield says)—tore violently. And married her sister Ellen and begot a son and a daughter which—(Without gentleness begot, Miss Rosa Coldfield says)—without gentleness. Which should have been the jewels of his old age, only—(Only they destroyed him or something or he destroyed them or something. And died)—and died. Without regret, Miss Rosa Coldfield says—(Save by her) Yes, save by her. (And by Quentin Compson) Yes. And by Quentin Compson.* (p. 9)

Faulkner says it is "two separate Quentins now talking to one another," but in fact the ghost-Quentin's role is merely to echo Rosa's rhetoric to his uninvolved, ironic other self; hence this internal exchange is a miniature version of the actual dialogue (if the word is appropriate for such a lopsided conversation) between Rosa and Quentin. As is the case in the actual dialogue, the Rosa-voice in the internal dialogue overpowers the other voice, moving out of parentheses toward the end. The preparing-for-Harvard Quentin, the Quentin who listens to Rosa, "regrets" Sutpen's death, seemingly, because it engenders the garrulity, outrage, and bafflement that Rosa inflicts on him.

In the second place, there is emphasis on how well Quentin knows the story already. "It was a part of his twenty years' heritage of breathing the same air and hearing his father talk about the man Sutpen" (11). Cleanth Brooks points out that before he visits Rosa, Quentin knows "in general detail" the story beginning with Sutpen's arrival in Jefferson, and, in very great detail, information about events following Sutpen's death.[4] He very likely also knows the information about Sutpen's childhood and his marriage to the Haitian sugar planter's daughter that he conveys to Shreve in the first part of Chapter 7 (pp. 218-65).[5] His familiarity with at least the outlines of Rosa's narrative is reiterated at the beginning of Chapter 2: "It was a day of listening too—the listening, the hearing in 1909 mostly about that which he already knew" (p. 31). Because he is already so well-versed, the narrator implies, Quentin is not exactly on the edge of his chair.

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[4] "The Narrative Structure of *Absalom, Absalom!*," pp. 368-70.

[5] Brooks offers no hypothesis about when Mr. Compson passes this information along to Quentin, but it is almost inconceivable that Quentin would grow up hear-

A third early indication of Quentin's uninvolvement is the difficulty he has settling on a motive for Rosa's determination to talk about it to him. He doesn't believe that she's being beneficent with literary material, as she claims, but his alternative to her explanation—that she wants people to know why God let the South lose the Civil War—doesn't satisfy him either, and he seems at that point to stop wondering. "The getting to it," he merely observes, "was taking a long time" (p. 13). Even after the long afternoon session is over, at some point during which Rosa must have told him her reason for summoning him, Quentin still is confused enough to need to ask his father: "'But why tell me about it? . . . What is it to me that the land of the earth or whatever it was got tired of him at last and turned and destroyed him? What if it did destroy her family too? It's going to turn and destroy us all some day . . .'" (p. 12).

This last comment is one of several passages in the first half of the book which indicate directly how little impact Rosa's narrative has on Quentin at the time he hears it. What he says at the beginning of Chapter 3 about Rosa's relationship with Sutpen suggests that he utterly misunderstands the reason for her outrage. It is hard to imagine that he could have listened to her with any attention at all and still believe that "he [Sutpen] threw Miss Rosa over" (p. 59). His thoughts about her at the beginning of Chapter 4, if not quite so obviously imperceptive, nevertheless reveal the absence of any sympathetic emotional involvement. His tone as he visualizes Rosa's preparations for the excursion out to the mansion is ironic, almost mocking. ("Yes, she would have the umbrella. She would emerge with it when he

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ing as much as he does from his father and not also hear this. Brooks notes, p. 374, that Mr. Compson, in his September evening talk with Quentin, several times refers to Sutpen's pre-Jefferson life but "seems to attach no great importance" to the information; neither does Quentin seem interested in questioning these references. The logical reason is that it is not new information to either of them. There is a bare possibility that Mr. Compson does not talk to Quentin about this until the day after Quentin goes out to Sutpen's Hundred with Rosa. Shreve on page 274 comments: "'And when your old man told it to you, you wouldn't have known what anybody was talking about if you hadn't been out there and seen Clytie.'" Yet this too is ambiguous; Quentin has "been out there" and has seen Clytie at least once before September 1909.

called for her and carry it invincibly into the spent suspiration of an evening without even dew . . ." [pp. 88-89].) It comes as no surprise when the narrator, at the end of the second part of Rosa's narrative, says that "Quentin was not listening" (p. 172).[6]

Nor is Quentin engrossed to any greater degree as he listens to his father in most of Chapters 2, 3, and 4. He says almost nothing in these chapters, and, with the exception of the passage at the beginning of Chapter 4, the narrator does not focus attention on what Quentin is thinking. At the end of Chapter 4, when Mr. Compson hands Charles Bon's letter to Quentin, the narrator says that Mr. Compson's voice continues "while Quentin heard it without listening" (p. 128); this is exactly the kind of detachment that characterizes his afternoon session with Rosa.

Quentin does, however, react to the letter: it brings vividly to his mind an image of Henry and Charles confronting one another at the gate. "It seemed to Quentin that he could actually see them . . ." (p. 132). Two things may be said about this reaction. First, in its particular context, it evidently results more from Quentin's direct experience with the letter than it does from his father's narrative. Earlier in Chapter 4 Mr. Compson dwells at great length on the intense emotional confrontation between Henry and Charles, and he several times mentions Bon's death. None of this speculation evokes any response from Quentin. It is with him, it seems, as Mr. Compson says: "'Yes, Judith, Bon, Henry, Sutpen: all of them. They are there, yet something is missing; . . . you bring them together in the proportions called for, but nothing happens'" (p. 101). Not until Quentin reads Bon's letter for himself does anything happen. Consciousness of the immediate "presence" of one of the actual actors in the drama, speaking of the depth of his passion, causes Quentin, even if only momentarily, to become involved.[7] The other thing that may be said about Quentin's reaction is that it is, in a sense, a continuation of an earlier reaction. At the end of Chapter 5 we learn that Quentin "could not pass" the scene which presumably follows immediately on the gate-scene—Henry telling Judith he has killed Bon. (Although readers encounter Quentin's response to the gate-scene before they see him engrossed by the bedroom-scene, in the story's chronology the latter precedes the former. Rosa talks about the bedroom-scene in the afternoon; Mr. Compson gives Quentin the letter in the evening). It is worth nothing that Quentin's version of the confrontation between Henry and Judith is much more detailed than the one he hears.[8] His father does not describe the confrontation, and Rosa's account (p. 135) includes neither description of Henry's appearance nor the dialogue that Quentin ponders (p. 172). In short, in the first five chapters Quentin listens passively to two people who tell him a story he has heard all his life. He seems totally impervious to all parts except one—the murder of the husband-to-be by the brother—and his interest in that part is only tangentially related to anything either teller says.[9]

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[6] Brooks (p. 372) believes readers are not supposed to take this statement literally, suggesting that Quentin at least heard Rosa narrate what Sutpen said to Judith when he returned. The evidence for this is that the greeting reappears in the Quentin-Shreve portion of the book. But, in fact, the passage Brooks cites (p. 277) is from the mouth of the third person narrator, not Quentin's or Shreve's. (This is clear because of the forms of address used for Rosa and Quentin's father—"Miss Coldfield" and "Mr. Compson." Quentin invariably says "Miss Rosa" and "Father"; Shreve calls Rosa everything *but* "Miss Coldfield," and Mr. Compson is always "your father.") It seems more likely that Quentin really has not heard, in any profound sense, anything Rosa has said in Chapter 5. Readers should compare their own responses to Chapter 5 to Quentin's response as it is revealed in the comments discussed above. It is my experience that Faulkner creates a good deal of sympathy for Rosa through her impassioned monologue.

[7] Faulkner underlies the brevity of the vision by moving abruptly from the high drama of the exchange between Charles and Henry to the brutal comedy of Wash Jones's "'Kilt him dead as a beef'" (p. 133).

[8] Schoenberg notes this fact, *Old Tales and Talking*, p. 103.

[9] Even if we discount the genealogy at the end, the fact that Quentin reacts to this particular scene plainly indicates that we are intended to read his behavior in *Absalom, Absalom*! in light of what we know about him from *The Sound and the Fury*. The reaction would be totally unmotivated, otherwise. Faulkner wrote to Harrison Smith: "Quentin Compson, of the Sound and Fury, tells it, or ties it together; he is the protagonist so that it is not complete apocrypha. I use him because it is just before he is to commit suicide because of his sister, and I use his bitterness which he has projected on the South in the form of hatred of it and its people to get more out of the story itself than a historical novel would be." (*Selected Letters of William Faulkner*, ed. Joseph Blotner [New York: Random House, 1977], p. 79.) He needs to be taken at his word. A number of critics have made this point recently—Joseph Reed in *Faulkner's Narrative* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), John Irwin in *Doubling and Incest/Repetition and Revenge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), M. E. Bradford, Cleanth Brooks, Estella Schoenberg—but one still encounters statements like Albert Guerard's in *The Triumph of the Novel: Dickens, Dostoevsky, Faulkner* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976): "*The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom*! are (like *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*) great autonomous novels... and our feelings for one Quentin should not control our feelings for the other" (p. 311).

By the end of Chapter 5 we have received all the novel contains about Quentin's September exposure to the story except for the scene in which he accompanies Rosa to the mansion and confronts Henry. It is perhaps too obvious to need pointing out that Faulkner does not dramatize a conversation between Quentin and his father the following day, though we are told that one took place.[10] We know from the description of Quentin's return home (p. 372) that the midnight experience provokes a strong response, but since we don't see him the next day, we have no way of determining how lasting or how profound the experience was. We cannot take his response to the experience of *reliving* the encounter in January as a measure of the depth of the impact of the encounter itself; too many things happen in the interim that might also explain his behavior in the last chapter. It is also clear that Quentin and Shreve have discussed the Sutpens in great detail before January 1910; Shreve apparently already knows everything except the information Quentin passes along in Chapter 7. But Faulkner gives no information about any of these previous talk-sessions, so that, beyond observing that the fact of his telling the story to other people indicates some preoccupation with it, we can make no statements about Quentin's involvement in the story *between* September 1909 and January 1910. (It is probably legitimate, however, to conclude that earlier talks did not produce the reaction we see in Chapter 9; if they did, wouldn't we have heard about them?)

Cleanth Brooks argues that seeing Henry has a very great impact on Quentin and that the intensity of Quentin's reaction is the reason why he is sullen in Chapters 6-8 and why we do not get the confrontation scene (which Brooks calls "the climactic point of the novel") until near the end. "If we are aware of how much Quentin felt involved in, and how much he was shaken by, his encounter with Henry, we can better understand why he shrank from having to repeat certain circumstances, even in memory." [11] Undeniably, the encounter affects him. But I do not think the meeting with Henry—or the aspect of the story which the meeting might be said to emblemize (i.e., Quentin's involvement with the Henry-Judith-Bon triangle)—is what Faulkner intends us to take as the event which affects Quentin *most* powerfully. The techniques of narration in Chapters 6-8 and Quentin's peculiar attitude suggest that the ultimate impact everything has on him is a function of his perception of Rosa.

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[10] For an argument that the conversation between Quentin and his father in Chapter 3 takes place *after* Quentin's excursion to the mansion with Rosa, see John A. Hodgson, "'Logical Sequence and Continuity': Some Observations on the Typographical and Structural Consistency of *Absalom, Absalom!*," *American Literature*, 43 (1971), 97-107.

[11] "The Narrative Structure of *Absalom, Absalom!*," p. 376.

First, Quentin's attitude. It is first described as "sullen" on page 181, eight pages into Chapter 6; at the beginning of Chapter 7 his voice is "level, curious, a little dreamy yet still with that overtone of sullen bemusement, of smoldering outrage" (p. 218). There is little to suggest that this attitude results from his thinking about Henry and Judith. Rather, it seems a direct product of his father's letter about Rosa's death. The bemusement is evident in the odd syntax and cryptic sense of his first speech after he reads half the letter: "'No, neither aunt, cousin, nor uncle, Rosa. Miss Rosa Coldfield, an old lady that died young of outrage in 1866 one summer'" (p. 174). Thereafter it is almost always mentioned in connection with the letter.[12] Moreover, the reappearance of the word *outrage* in the narrator's description of Quentin's voice indicates even more plainly the connection we are meant to perceive between Quentin's sullenness and his gradually clarifying conception of Rosa.

Besides the attitude which his posture and tone bespeak, there is the attitude his thoughts reflect. In Chapter 6 Quentin has two recurring thoughts. One is that Shreve sounds just like Mr. Compson.[13] This thought signifies an awareness of his experience with the Sutpen story which is different from any kind of awareness he has in the book's first half. In the first chapters Quentin never manifests any consciousness of the modes or styles of the narrators he listens to. He does not seem to notice that his father sounds different from Rosa. In Chapter 6, for the first time, he is conscious that the teller stands in a particular relation to the story told. If Quentin recognizes that Shreve sounds like Mr. Compson, he must also have recognized that

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[12] Pp. 217-18: "he seemed to be looking at [the letter], or as near as Shreve could tell, he was, his face lowered a little, brooding, almost sullen." P. 238: "Quentin had not moved, not even to raise his head from its attitude of brooding bemusement upon the open letter...." P. 255: "He had not moved, talking apparently (if to anything) to the letter.... He spoke still in that curious, that almost sullen flat tone." See also pp. 258 and 275. On p. 280 the narrator says "the reason for Quentin's sullen bemusement" is "the youthful shame of being moved," but does not specify what moves him.

[13] See pp. 181, 207, and 211. On p. 261, in Chapter 7, Shreve points out that Quentin, too, sounds like Mr. Compson, and Quentin thinks, "Maybe we are both Father."

Mr. Compson does not sound like Rosa. He must, in short, have become conscious of *Rosa's* voice in order to know that Shreve's voice resembles his father's. The second of Quentin's recurring thoughts is chagrin at how long he has had to listen and how much he has had to hear.[14] It is important to note the distinction between this attitude and the one with which he listens in the first part of the book. Although he tunes out both Rosa and his father from time to time, Quentin never expresses dismay at having to hear too much. There is a sense of foreboding here that is not present earlier. It does not seem to be the threat of boredom that worries him. Instead, he seems nervous, as if dreading what is to come. Why would the prospect of another hearing affect him in this way? How is this hearing different from earlier ones? (We know, or we assume, that he has not been reluctant to talk about it during the fall preceding this). It is different because Shreve is the narrator, of course, but that difference is negligible, since "*Shreve sounds almost exactly like father*." I think the significant difference is that this rehearsal of the story follows hard on Quentin's return from a Christmas vacation which, as Cleanth Brooks rightly imagines, must have been dominated by talk of Rosa's second trip to the mansion and the conflagration. This rehearsal is generated by the letter about Rosa's death, which inevitably brings to Quentin's mind the circumstances which precipitated her death. They are in his mind; he knows that going through the story again will cause him to have to confront them; he does not want to do this.

One of the results of Quentin's reluctance to hear the story again is his general passivity regarding the narrating of it. Criticism has customarily spoken of the *four* narrators of *Absalom, Absalom!* (or five if the "omniscient" narrator is counted)—Rosa, Mr. Compson, Shreve, Quentin.[15] John Irwin has recently argued that "of these four certainly Quentin is the central narrator, not just because he ends up knowing more of the story than do the other three, but because the other three only function as narrators in relation to Quentin.... One reason that the voices of the different narrators sound so much alike is that we hear those voices filtered through the mind of a single listener: Quentin's consciousness is the fixed point of view from which the reader *overhears* the various narrators, Quentin included." Later in his book there is a slightly different formulation of this point: Quentin is a "passive narrator," although in the second half he "seems to move from a passive role to an active role in the narrative repetition of the past." [16] There are several assertions here that one might question, but the important one is the notion of Quentin as narrator. It seems to me that the concept *narrator* has to be stretched radically to call Quentin *any* kind of narrator in the first five chapters (not only is he not telling; he is scarcely *listening*), and I do not think the term describes him very well, except in a technical sense, in the last four chapters, either. Quentin only very briefly, if at all, displays anything like the clearly-defined narrative consciousness that distinguishes Rosa's, Mr. Compson's, and Shreve's versions of events.

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[14] See pp. 193, 207, 210, and 211.

[15] See, for example, Ilse Dusoir Lind, "The Design and Meaning of *Absalom! Absalom!* [sic]," *PMLA*, 70 (1955), 887-912, and Lynn Gartrell Levins, "The Four Narrative Perspectives in *Absalom, Absalom!*," *PMLA*, 85 (1970), 35-47. Estella Schoenberg (*Old Tales and Talking*, p. 73) says there are "nearly a dozen" narrators.

In Chapter 6 there are three primary narrators—the omniscient narrator, Shreve, and Mr. Compson. The omniscient narrator's voice begins the chapter, interposes (187 ff.) to set the quail-hunt segment, and appears briefly again at the end of the segment on page 210. Mr. Compson is the narrator during the quail-hunt segment. (That is, it is Mr. Compson's voice we hear, though we hear it in Quentin's thoughts.) Shreve speaks on pp. 176-81 and at the end of the chapter. There are three Chapter 6 passages in which the narrative voice is ambiguous—pp. 181-87 (beginning "*Mad impotent old man*..."), pp. 207-08 (beginning "*And who to know*..."), and pp. 211-15 (beginning "*Beautiful lives women live*..."). Gerald Langford's collation of the University of Texas *Absalom, Absalom!* manuscript with the printed text indicates that the portion of the chapter which includes these passages underwent revision which reduced Shreve's narrative role: what was originally Shreve's recital became, in the book, Quentin's reverie.[17] One might, then, say of these passages that Quentin narrates them by thinking them—but it is, as Langford says, "noteworthy" that there are no important changes in the phrasing except pronomial ones. In a technical sense Quentin may be "remembering" these events, but he is remembering them in exactly the language Shreve or Mr. Compson uses elsewhere in the chapter, and he is remembering them at exactly the time that Shreve is speaking about them. Roommate and father remain, practically speaking, the narrators. Certainly, the passages reflect no distinct point of view or style that might be called Quentin's.

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[16] *Doubling and Incest*, pp. 26, 114.

[17] *Faulkner's Revision of* Absalom, Absalom! (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), pp. 33-34 and pp. 190, 218, 221.

Nor is it accurate to call Quentin a narrator, in the sense that the others are narrators, in Chapter 7. It is true that he speaks a great deal: aside from a two-page introduction by the omniscient narrator and occasional interjections by the omniscient narrator and Shreve, he is the speaker for almost the entire chapter. But he is more tape recorder than narrator. His function is merely to be an information-conduit from father and grandfather to Shreve. There is scarcely a single page between 218 and 292 on which there is not at least one reminder that Quentin is repeating, apparently verbatim, things his father told him (some of which his father heard and repeated verbatim from *his* father). Quentin is not even involved in what he is saying, as his tendency simply to stop when there is a hiatus in the story indicates. (Shreve's intense involvement also dramatizes, by contrast, Quentin's apathy).

One passage in Chapter 7 does seem to indicate that Quentin is caught up in the telling. On page 277 Shreve's threatened interruption impels Quentin to assert, in near-panic, his right to be the teller. Yet immediately after this Quentin's voice ceases, and we hear first the omniscient narrator and then Mr. Compson, who repeats the information about Sutpen's proposal to Rosa and her reaction. When Quentin's voice resumes, he is said to be " taking Shreve up in stride without comma or colon or paragraph " (p. 290), but the narrative has moved on to the Sutpen/Milly Jones segment. The implication is that Quentin wants to maintain narrative control because he does not want the part about Sutpen and Rosa repeated, or at least Rosa's side of it. Several pages later, when he does tersely refer to it, he says nothing about the impact on Rosa: " ' So that Sunday came, a year after that day and three years after he had suggested to Miss Rosa that they try it first and if it was a boy and lived, they would be married ' " (p. 284). Hence, Quentin's " narration " is itself a means of avoiding involvement. If he is the speaker, he can omit whatever he doesn't want to think about, and he can adopt a mode of telling which has no effect on him. As Shreve notices (p. 261), Quentin, too, sounds like Mr. Compson—not surprising, since he merely repeats Mr. Compson's account.

The narration in Chapter 8 is divided between Shreve and the omniscient narrator, though the omniscient narrator, with increasing frequency, reiterates a suggestion first made in Chapter 7—that Quentin's and Shreve's voices are interchangeable. "It was Shreve speaking, though . . . it might have been either of them and was in a sense both: both thinking as one, the voice which happened to be speaking the thought only the thinking become audible, vocal" (p. 303). In this chapter, too, the omniscient narrator insists on the imaginative identification of Quentin and Shreve with Henry and Charles ("the two the four the two facing one another in the tomb-like room"). Both motifs would seem to indicate that however disengaged Quentin has hitherto been, he is now fully caught up in the story. Yet the things Quentin actually says in this chapter—not to mention his unchanged posture or voice tone—do not support what the omniscient narrator says about him. When, for example, on page 311, Shreve forgets where the University of Mississippi is and pauses in his reconstruction to ask Quentin, Quentin's reply ("'Oxford . . . It's about forty miles from—'") is literalistic and pointlessly impedient. Neither do his denials of Shreve's description of love (p. 322 and p. 328) indicate any particular involvement or desire to participate in the telling. When Shreve excitedly asks him questions or asks for confirmation of specific versions of events, Quentin, except for a final unimpassioned "'Yes,'" either says he doesn't know (p. 324) or says nothing at all (p. 325). Clearly *Shreve* is tremendously exhilarated by the act of reconstruction, and clearly the omniscient narrator is excited as the moment approaches for the revelation to the reader that Charles Bon is part Negro. But there is no unquestionable indication that Quentin shares these emotions. One can justifiably conclude that the omniscient narrator's reliability—about Quentin, anyway—gives way as the climax of the Sutpen story nears.

In Chapters 1-5 Faulkner seems concerned to demonstrate that Rosa's and Mr. Compson's narratives do not touch Quentin's emotions. At the beginning of Chapter 6 Quentin is arrested ("stopped dead," like Rosa on the stairs to Judith's bedroom, like Sutpen at the door of the Tidewater plantation, and like Charles at the gate to Sutpen's Hundred) by his father's letter about Rosa's death; he spends Chapters 6-8 attempting to keep from thinking about the story, or at least about some parts of it. At the beginning of Chapter 9 his efforts fail. When he begins "to jerk all over, violently and uncontrollably" (p. 360), he is irrevocably involved. The organization and language of Chapter 9 confirm what Chapters 6-8 imply about the cause of

Quentin's dramatic physical reaction. Although reading Charles's letter enables him to "actually see" Charles and Henry's confrontation at the gate, and although seeing Henry Sutpen in the flesh causes some irrational panic after he takes Rosa home, Quentin is not irreversibly engaged until it becomes apparent to him that he will not be able to avoid "seeing" Rosa on her final visit to the Sutpen mansion.

Structurally, the greater emphasis falls on the conflagration scene than on the Quentin-Henry scene because the former follows the latter. Faulkner clearly intends the image of Rosa—"her face even in the sunlight lit by one last wild crimson reflection as the house collapsed and roared away" (p. 376)—to be climactic. It is not until Shreve has begun talking about this scene that Quentin thinks "'Nevermore of peace'" (p. 373), and it is not until he has imagined this scene that he can finish his father's letter. Virtually the whole rehearsal and imaginative reconstruction of the Sutpen saga is, as the narrator suggests in Chapter 8, "just so much that had to be overpassed . . . as someone always has to rake the leaves up before you can have the bonfire" (p. 316).[18]

Faulkner's language also indicates the importance of the bonfire scene. In the early part of the chapter, when Quentin recalls his trip out to the mansion with Rosa, there is emphasis on all the senses except seeing. He "could taste and feel the dust," "smell the old woman," "hear the dry plaint of the light wheels" (p. 362). As they walk to the house from the gate, Quentin "could still hear her," but "he could not see her at all" (p. 365). "Not sight but touch" tells him she has given him a hatchet. When he lifts her, he can "feel something fierce and implacable and dynamic" (p. 367). In pointed contrast, Quentin *sees* Rosa beginning on page 374. This emphasis on vision contrasts also with the language describing Quentin's confrontation with Henry. As he mounts the stairs he tells himself he "must see now" (p. 370), but although he does literally see Henry, and there are visual images to confirm this, the verb *to see* conspicuously does not appear.

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[18] "Bonfire," from the Middle English *banfir* or *banefyre*, literally a bone fire, a fire for burning corpses. When Quentin sees him in September 1909, Henry Sutpen is lying with his hands "crossed on the breast as if he were already a corpse" (p. 373). Clytie also dies in the fire, and Rosa enters her death-coma immediately upon her return to town. It is also a "Bon-fire": Shreve guesses that it was Jim Bond, Charles Bon's grandson, who had kept that closet under the stairs full of tinder and trash" (p. 374).

> . . . entered the bare, stale room whose shutters were closed too, where a second lamp burned dimly on a crude table; waking or sleeping it was the same: the bed, the yellow sheets and pillow, the wasted yellow face with closed, almost transparent eyelids on the pillow, the wasted hands crossed on the breast as if he were already a corpse; waking or sleeping it was the same and would be the same forever as long as he lived. (p. 373)

In another small way, too, the language in this passage implies the greater significance of Rosa's impact on Quentin. Shreve earlier says that the only thing Quentin knows is that Rosa "'refused at the last to be a ghost'" (p. 362); Henry's hands make him resemble a corpse.

What is implied by Quentin's "seeing" Rosa? Surely, one thing Faulkner means is that Quentin at last perceives the complete extent of the effect on Rosa of her last conversation with Sutpen. Rosa's Chapter 5 soliloquy reveals (to readers—not to Quentin, who does not hear it) an intensity of emotion equalled by nothing in the book except perhaps Sutpen's monomania. As she portrays herself (and we have no reason to question the accuracy of her portrayal), she is utterly misconceived by those who image her isolation to be the result of rejection, in the obvious sense, by Sutpen. As "all polymath love's androgynous advocate," she is crushed not by any commonplace personal disappointment in love, but rather by what Sutpen's proposition implies about love itself. Although the shot which kills Charles "wakes" her from the state in which "the entire delicate spirit's bent is one anonymous climaxless epicene and unravished nuptial" (p. 145)—a state which she also describes as being unborn, "shod with the very damp and velvet silence of the womb"—her conception of love is still intact when the possibility arises that she will marry Sutpen. She is "turned twenty true enough yet still a child, still living in that womb-like corridor" (p. 162), still certain of "that magic in unkin blood which we call by the pallid name of love" (p. 168), when Sutpen's proposition causes "the death of hope and love, the death of pride and principle, and then the death of everything save the old outraged and aghast unbelieving" (p. 168). Her fury springs, it is clear, from Sutpen's utter disregard (the more brutal because implicit) for the single sensation which has made life meaningful for her. The phrases describing her in the book's final scene—"small furious grim implacable woman," "light thin furious creature . . .

struggling with silent and bitter fury"—contrast strikingly with Quentin's conception of her in the book's first scene. There, the cause of her grief is said to be either "sister, father, or nothusband," and the emotion described as "impotent yet indomitable" is not fury or despair, but "frustration." These phrases, in juxtaposition with the reference to "female old flesh long embattled in virginity" and the similes likening her to a child, imply that Quentin's view of her at that point is the popular one: "'Rosie Coldfield, lose him, weep him, caught a man but couldn't keep him'" (p. 168). His altered vision in the last scene suggests that he finally allows himself to apprehend the sense of what she articulates in Chapter 5.

But "seeing" Rosa more importantly means, I believe, seeing himself. Rosa, describing her state of mind in the aftermath of Charles' death, says:

> *There are some things which happen to us which the intelligence and the senses refuse just as the stomach sometimes refuses what the palate has accepted but which digestion cannot compass—occurrences which stop us dead as though by some impalpable intervention, like a sheet of glass through which we watch all subsequent events transpire as though in a soundless vacuum, and fade, vanish; are gone, leaving us immobile, impotent, helpless; fixed, until we can die.* (p. 151)

This passage might also be read as a description of *Quentin's* state of mind in the book's last half. Quentin's vision of Rosa at the end, "struggling and fighting like a doll in a nightmare" (p. 376), is of a creature "stopped dead," fixed unalterably in a rage which forty-three years have not diminished at all. This vision—which, as I have suggested, pushes its way toward consciousness as Quentin begins to read his father's letter—generates in Quentin the state it emblemizes. Perceiving Rosa, he too becomes "immobile, impotent, helpless."

Moreover, he understands that this has happened. Seeing Rosa, he "becomes" Rosa; becoming Rosa, he understands certain truths about himself and his relation to the people and events he has apathetically received information about all his life. Shreve indicates near the beginning of the last chapter that comprehending the South is not automatically coincident with being born and raised in it; rather, it is connected with understanding the fact that Rosa "'refused at the last to be a ghost'" (p. 362). Quentin's vision of Rosa at the end causes him to be unable to regard her any more as one of the "garrulous outraged baffled ghosts" who insist on "telling him about old ghost-times" (p. 9); she becomes, for him, a living person. He recognizes that he is in the sort of relationship with her that she has known herself to be in with the ghostly Sutpen clan: though dead, she is now real to him as they, even after their deaths, have been real to her.

The second half of Mr. Compson's letter suggests to Quentin the significance of this transformation. Rosa, in dying (Mr. Compson says), has "*gained that place or bourne where the objects of the outrage and of the commiseration also are no longer ghosts but are actual people*" (p. 377). To die, that is, is to begin to experience ghosts as real people. Quentin's ability finally to "read" the letter, then, may be taken as an emblem of his ability to internalize the meaning of Rosa's reification in his vision of her; since she has refused to be a ghost, he has himself become one. He recognizes that his life, like the lives of ghosts and Rosa Coldfield, will partake "'Nevermore of peace'" (p. 373). The preparing-for-Harvard persona of the book's opening pages, Quentin understands, has given way to the Quentin "still too young to deserve yet to be a ghost, but nevertheless having to be one for all that" (p. 9).

Broadly speaking, *Absalom, Absalom!* is a narrative of the South reclaiming its own. To understand the South is to be deprived of life, to be rendered a ghost. But in another sense, the book is the account of Quentin's emotional revivification: ironically, he is fully "alive" only in the book's last pages. Quentin's response to Shreve's question about his reason for hating the South must be taken as both sincere and pathetic. Why, indeed, from his point of view, *should* he hate the South, when the process of understanding his relation with it has been the means by which he emerges from the stupor he is in for most of the book? Readers, however, perceive the connection between Quentin and the redworm Mr. Compson sees in a clod thrown up from Rosa's grave—"*doubtless alive*" as she is buried but "*frozen again*" by afternoon.

GAIL LEVIN*

Wassily Kandinsky and the American Literary Avant-garde

For Wylie Sypher

As a result of the publication of his treatise *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* in mid-December 1911, and *Der Blaue Reiter* the almanac published in 1912 that he edited in Munich together with the German painter Franz Marc, the Russian Wassily Kandinsky began to be recognized as one of the most innovative modern artists working with abstraction.[1] Although much that he expressed in his essays was not new, he managed to articulate many concepts central to the development of abstract art both in Europe and America. His far-reaching influence is at least partially the result of his dual role as both painter and theorist. His writing was not the remote thinking of a critic but an artist's attempt to honestly confront and outline the new creative possibilities which appeared to be opening up in the twentieth century. His treatise elucidated ideas important for the justification of abstraction; it was at once both a rationale for the past developments of Matisse and Picasso and an open-ended challenge to pursue as yet unanswered questions. Kandinsky's own paintings, particularly the artist's Improvisations of 1909-14, suggested a new freedom of expression.

American artists as diverse as Alfred Stieglitz, Marsden Hartley, Arthur Dove, Abraham Walkowitz, Albert Bloch, Konrad Cramer, Hans Hofmann, Arshile Gorky, Jackson Pollock, and Willem de

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[1] Wassily Kandinsky, *Über das Geistige in der Kunst: Insbesondere in der Malerei* (Munich, 1912), translated by M. T. H. Sadler as *The Art of Spiritual Harmony* (London and Boston, 1914); republished in new revised edition as *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1947). Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, eds., *Der Blaue Reiter*, 2nd ed. (Munich: R. Piper & Co., 1914); translated documentary edition, Klaus Lankheit, ed., *The Blaue Reiter Almanac, Edited by Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc* (New York: The Viking Press, 1974).

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Kooning were attracted to Kandinsky's art and theory.[2] Certain American writers were also involved with Kandinsky's ideas, particularly Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams. The significant interest in Kandinsky among the American literary avant-garde has not yet received the attention it deserves.

Of these writers, only Gertrude Stein actually met Kandinsky, and of this acquaintance, all that is known is that she once visited Kandinsky's studio during the period he lived in France, from May 1906 to June 1907, where she saw his tempera paintings.[3] They probably met through a mutual friend, Hans Purrmann, a young German art student who had known Kandinsky in Munich where they had both been pupils of Fritz von Stuck. Purrmann, impressed by Matisse's Fauvist paintings at the Salon d'Automne of 1905, soon accompanied the American painter Maurice Sterne to the home of the collectors Gertrude and Leo Stein where he eventually met Matisse (whose school he helped to organize in the fall of 1907).[4]

Gertrude Stein's first opportunity to see Kandinsky's work was at the Salon d'Automne of 1904 where he was represented by eighteen examples. Leo later commented that at this Salon he had "looked again and again at every single picture, just as a botanist might at the flora of an unknown land." [5] The following year Kandinsky exhibited twelve works at the Salon d'Automne. Of this Salon Gertrude recalled: "The show had a great deal of freshness and was not alarming"; she paid particular attention for she and Leo purchased Matisse's *Woman with the Hat.*[6] That same year Kandinsky had attained prominence enough to be made a Sociétaire of the Salon d'Automne by vote of the fondateurs. She has ample opportunity to become familiar with his art which was exhibited regularly in Paris at the Salon d'Automne and other group exhibitions; it was also featured in reviews and articles in French publications such as *Les Tendances Nouvelles*, *L'Art et Les Artistes*, and *La Chronique des arts et de la curiosité*.[7]

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[2] For further information on the interest in Kandinsky among American artists, see Sandra Gail Levin, "Wassily Kandinsky and the American Avant-Garde, 1912-1950," Ph.D. dissertation, Rutgers University, 1976; and Gail Levin "Miró, Kandinsky and the Genesis of Abstract Expressionism," in Robert Carleton Hobbs and Gail Levin, *Abstract Expressionism: The Formative Years* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1979).

[3] Johannes Eicher, *Kandinsky und Gabriele Munter: Von Ursprungen moderner Kunst* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1957), p. 52, "Gertrud Stein besuchte ihn im Atelier, sah seine Temperagemalde und lachelte."

[4] K. F. Ertel, "Hans Purrmann," *Kunstwerk*, 2, November-December 1958, 41. Will Grohmann, *Wassily Kandinsky: Life and Work* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1959), p. 36. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Matisse: His Art and His Public* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1951), pp. 58-59 and 116-117.

[5] Leo Stein, *Appreciation: Painting, Poetry and Prose* (New York: Random House, 1947), p. 124.

[6] Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, in *Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein* (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 32.

If Gertrude Stein remained unenthusiastic about his work, she must have been initially puzzled at the attention her friends the American painter Marsden Hartley and the German sculptor Arnold Rönnebeck paid to Kandinsky's art, his book *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*, and to the almanac *Der Blaue Reiter*. Stein met Hartley in the spring of 1912 soon after his arrival from New York where he had been closely associated with Alfred Stieglitz and the coterie at his gallery known as "291" for its address on Fifth Avenue.[8] That autumn, Hartley introduced Stein to Rönnebeck whom he had met in Paris over the summer. About this time Hartley became fascinated with Kandinsky's work, the primitive art in *Der Blaue Reiter*, and the artist's treatise *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*. He decided to make a brief trip (January 7-28, 1913) to Germany in order to "meet Kandinsky and size up the Blaue Reiter group and its activity there."[9] He and Rönnebeck visited Kandinsky in his studio and were very impressed. Hartley was particularly enthusiastic and, in February 1913, wrote to Stieglitz: "I know that what I have to express coincides perfectly with his notion of Das Geistige in der Kunst."[10]

Stein would also have known of Kandinsky's inclusion of her friend the French painter Robert Delaunay in the almanac *Der Blaue Reiter* and that Delaunay exhibited with artists of this group in Munich and Berlin.[11] She wrote of the poet and critic Guillaume Apollinaire's trip to Berlin on the occasion of Delaunay's exhibition at the gallery Der Strum in January 1913: "It was Guillaume's first opportunity to travel, he went to Germany with Delaunay and thoroughly enjoyed himself."[12]

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[7] For an account of the attention paid to Kandinsky at this time in Paris, see Jonathan David Fineberg, "Kandinsky in Paris, 1906-7," Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1975.

[8] For further information on this meeting, see Levin, "Wassily Kandinsky and the American Avant-Garde, 1912-1950."

[9] Quoted in Gail Levin, "Marsden Hartley, Kandinsky, and *Der Blaue Reiter*," *Arts Magazine*, 52, November 1977, p. 156. For further detail, see Levin, "Wassily Kandinsky and the American Avant-garde, 1912-1950."

[10] Ibid., p. 156.

[11] For Hartley's relationship to Delaunay, see Gail Levin. *Synchronism and American Color Abstraction, 1910-1925* (New York: George Braziller, 1978). Delaunay was included with Der Blaue Reiter in their first and second group

Perhaps her distaste for Germans contributed to her continuing lack of enthusiasm for the work of artists living in Germany and assiciated with *Der Blaue Reiter*. She turned down Rönnebeck's invitation to visit him in Germany, saying "I like you alright but I don't like Germans."[13] She evidently felt familiar enough with Kandinsky's recent painting to write to Stieglitz in the spring of 1913 that Hartley "has done what in Kandinsky is only a direction."[14] Although she would appear to dismiss Kandinsky as unimportant, there is reason to believe that her expressed attitude may have been disingenuous. For as John Brinnin pointed out in his study of Gertrude Stein: "She was shy about admitting to the slightest literary influence from any quarter."[15]

Rönnebeck's letter to Stein of April 1, 1913, documents her knowledge of Kandinsky's prosepoems "*Klänge*," as the German sculptor enclosed a clipping from a Berlin newspaper reproducing several examples. Writing that he thought Kandinsky's poems might interest her, Rönnebeck pointed out:

> They show rather well Kandinsky's intentions in using the *word* itself as a pure interior sound (Klang)—and how, thus applied, it loses its quality as a name of a certain object.[16]

It is also reasonable to assume that Gertrude Stein was, at the very least, familiar with the ideas set forth in Kandinsky's *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*, especially through discussions with Hartley and Rönnebeck who were so charmed by their meeting with the Russian artist. Stein would have read the excerpt translated by Stieglitz and published

exhibitions in Munich, December 1911-January 1912 and February 1912; he also showed with artists of this group in March-April 1912 in Berlin.

[12] Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, p. 93. On January 18, 1913, Apollinaire lectured in Berlin on modern painting.

[13] Ibid., p. 96.

[14] Quoted in Donald Gallup, "The Weaving of a Pattern: Marsden Hartley and Gertrude Stein," *Magazine of Art*, 41 (1948), 256.

[15] John Malcolm Brinnin, *The Third Rose: Gertrude Stein and Her World* (Boston: Little Brown, 1959), p. 165.

[16] Donald Gallup, ed., *The Flowers of Friendship: Letters Written to Gertrude Stein* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), p. 77.

as *The Spiritual in Art* in the *Camera Work* issue of July 1912, which preceded her own portraits of Matisse and Picasso published in the following issue of Camera Work.[17]

In late June 1914, after Leo Stein had left his sister and Alice B. Toklas to go and live in Florence, John Lane, the English publisher, visited Gertrude Stein bringing to her the first copy of the Vorticist magazine *Blast* co-edited by Wyndam Lewis and Ezra Pound. According to the account in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, he "wanted to know what she thought of it and would she write for it. She said she did not know."[18] That Gertrude Stein owned this first issue of *Blast*, published June 30, 1914, again documents her acquaintance with Kandinsky's writing, for this issue contains artist Edward Wadsworth's article "Inner Necessity," which both reviews Kandinsky's book *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* and extensively quotes excerpts translated by Wadsworth.[19] It is logical that the English artists and writers who formed the Vorticist movement, an independent synthesis of certain Cubist and Futurist ideas, should have found Kandinsky's work appealing, for they too favored innovation and saw in his work an original means of expression.

In the fall of 1914, Gertrude Stein's book *Tender Buttons* was published in New York by Claire Marie, a small firm just started by Donald Evans dedicated to "New Books for Exotic Tastes."[20] According to *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, two of the three manuscripts comprising *Tender Buttons* were written during their first trip to Spain in the late spring and summer of 1912, and the other (Food, Rooms, etcetera) immediately upon their return.[21] It would be interesting to know what Stein's reaction was to the review of her book *Tender Buttons* in *The Little Review*. Written by Alexander S. Kaun (in his pen name Ibn Gabirol), this article draws a parallel between her writing in *Tender Buttons* and Kandinsky:

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[17] Wassily Kandinsky, "Extracts from *The Spiritual in Art*," *Camera Work*, 39 (1912), 34. Stein's portraits appeared in the *Camera Work* special number, August, 1912.

[18] Stein, *Autobiography*, p. 132.

[19] Edward Wadsworth, "Inner Necessity," *Blast*, No. 1 (June 20, 1914), pp. 119-25.

[20] Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons*, 1914, reprinted in Patricia Meyerowitz, ed., *Gertrude Stein, Writings and Lectures 1909-1945* (London: Owen, 1967), pp. 161-206.

[21] Stein, *Autobiography*, p. 147.

> It is an exquisite little thing in cream covers, with a green moon in the center, implying the yolk of an egg with which "something is the matter," and it gave me rare pleasure to witness the first attempt to revolutionize the most obsolete and inflexible medium of Art—words. The author has endeavored to use language in the same way as Kandinsky uses his colors: to discard conventional structure, to eliminate understandable figures and forms, and to create a "spiritual harmony," leaving the layman the task of discovering the "*innerer Klang*." Both iconoclasts have admirably succeeded; both the "Improvisations" and the little "essays" on roast beef and seltzer-bottles have given me the great joy of cocreating, allowing me to interpret them in my own autonomous way.[22]

Kaun pointed out that Kandinsky had discussed the use of word repetition in his treatise and that "Gertrude Stein has beautifully followed this recipe."[23] In the passage Kaun referred to, Kandinsky explained:

> The apt use of a word (in its poetical sense), its repetition, twice three times, or even more frequently, according to the need of the poem, will not only tend to intensify the internal structure but also bring out unsuspected spiritual properties in the word itself. Further, frequent repetition of a word (a favorite game of children, forgotten in later life) deprives the word of its external reference. Similarly, the symbolic reference of a designated object tends to be forgotten and only the sound is retained.[24]

According to Kaun, Stein's ordinary words have lost their "external reference" under her knowing manipulation and he claimed that her words:

> ...in their grotesque arrangements, frequent repetition, and intentional incoherence...have come to serve as quaint ephemeral sounds of a suggestive sympathy, or, if you please cacophony. *The Tender Buttons* arouse in the sympathetic reader a limitless amount of moods, from scherzo to maesto-

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[22] Ibn Gabirol [Alexander S. Kaun], "My Friend the Incurable," *The Little Review*, 1, No. 8 (1914), 43-44. Kaun chose as his pen name Ibn Gabirol (1021-1058) who was the first Spanish Jewish philosopher.

[23] Kaun, "Friend," p. 44.

[24] Kandinsky, *Concerning*, p. 34.

> so. . .should be chanted to the music of another great conoclast, Schoenberg.[25]

Kaun's suggestion that Stein is writing poetry in which she uses repetition as Kandinsky has directed in his treatise is supported by an examination of her work *Tender Buttons*. As an example, one may consider the following excerpt from *Tender Buttons* titled simply "A Dog":

> A little monkey goes like a donkey that means to say that means to say that more sighs last goes. Leave with it. A little monkey goes like a donkey.[26]

Stein addressed the question of repetition in "Poetry and Grammar," one of the lectures she gave on her tour of America in 1934. Recalling what is undoubtedly her most often quoted line, "A rose is a rose is a rose," she stated:

> I have said that a noun is a name of anything by definition that is what it is and a name of anything is not interesting because once you know its name the enjoyment of naming is over and therefore in writing prose names that is nouns are completely uninteresting. But and that is a thing to be remembered you can love a name and if you love a name then saying that name any number of times only makes you love it more, more violently more persistently more tormentedly.[27]

Her reference to loving a name corresponds to Kandinsky's notion of "spiritual properties in the word itself." Stein's unacknowledged appreciation of the relationship of her endeavors to Kandinsky's ideas is indicated by her direct use of Kandinsky's phrase "inner necessity":

> Of course you might say why not invent new names new languages but that cannot be done. It takes a tremendous amount of inner necessity to invent even one word, one can invent imitating movements and emotions in sounds, and in the poetical language of some languages you have that, the Ger-

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[25] Kaun, "Friend," p. 44. Kaun also parodied Gertrude Stein's style in *Tender Buttons* in a review of Arthur Jerome Eddy's *Cubists and Post-Impressionism* and only in this parody did he mention Kandinsky, whom he had omitted in his more serious discussion of the book, "The Savage Painters," *The Little Review*, No. 5 (1914), 63.

[26] Stein, *Tender Buttons*, p. 174.

[27] Meyerowitz, ed., *Stein*, "Poetry and Grammar," p. 139.

> man language as a language suffers from this what the words mean sound too much like what they do, and children do these things by one sort or another of invention but this has really nothing to do with language.[28]

Stein's familiarity with the German language is indicated in the above statement. Her father, Daniel Stein (at the age of eight), had emigrated to the United States from a small Bavarian village with his parents. Her mother Amelia Keyser was also from a family of German Jews. Before Gertrude was a year old, her parents took their five children and went to live in Vienna where they remained for around three years. After moving to Paris for more than a year, the Steins returned to the United States and settled in Oakland, California. The Stein children attended public schools in Oakland, but from time to time Daniel Stein "revised his democratic principles and he decided his children should be proficient in European languages and hired tutors to teach them at home." [29]

It is very likely that Gertrude Stein read the first German edition of Kandinsky's *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* in early 1912, shortly after it was published. She and Leo Stein had for years frequented the ex-clown Clovis Sagot's art gallery on the rue Lafitte (where they bought some of their first paintings by Picasso as early as 1905) where Marsden Hartley mentioned (in a letter to Alfred Stieglitz) that Kandinsky's book was for sale.[30]

Critics such as Edmund Wilson have linked *Tender Buttons* to the Cubist still lifes of Picasso and Braque:

> A pattern of assorted words, though they might make nonsense from the traditional point of view, would be analogous to a Cubist canvas composed of unidentifiable fragments.[31]

Certainly what has been called Gertrude Stein's "compulsion to sweep away the underpinnings of language and rhetoric" [32] was supported by her acquaintance with ideas in Kandinsky's treatise. Her friend Carl Van Vechten may have alluded to this possibility in one of his articles on Gertrude Stein's work in 1914: "Miss Stein . . . has readily turned language into music, really made it sound more important than its sense."[33]

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[28] Meyerowitz, ed., *Stein*, "Poetry and Grammar," p. 142.

[29] James Mellow, *Stein*, p. 23.

[30] Hartley postcard to Steiglitz, n. d., 1912, Yale.

[31] Edmund Wilson, *Axel's Castle* (New York: C. Scribner's, 1931), p. 242.

[32] Brinnin, *Third Rose*, p. 161.

Intriguingly, the first birthday of Société Anonyme (an organization founded by Marcel Duchamp and Katherine Dreier to promote modern art in America) was celebrated with a reading from Gertrude Stein's unpublished works on April 30, 1921. In 1923, Société Anonyme made Wassily Kandinsky its honorary vice-president which he remained until his death in 1944. Among those reading Gertrude Stein's work were two of the strongest American admirers Kandinsky ever had—Marsden Hartley and Katherine Dreier.

Ezra Pound, who first arrived in London in 1908, may have come into contact with Kandinsky's work at one of the exhibitions of the Allied Artists' Association, held at the Ropal Albert Hall in London, where Kandinsky's art was shown in 1909, 1910, 1911, and 1912. If Pound had not already discovered Kandinsky, he had another opportunity to see the Russian artist's work at the Grafton Group exhibition held from March 15-31, 1913 at the Alpine Club Gallery. Pound probably read M. T. H. Sadler's article discussing Kandinsky and *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* in the Spring 1912 issue of *Rhythm* as this little avant-garde magazine, known as an " Art Music Literature Quarterly," would surely have interested him.[34] By September 1, 1914, months after Sadler's English translation of Kandinsky's treatise appeared, Pound published his essay " Vorticism " wherein he discussed Imagist poetry in relationship to Kandinsky's theories on painting.

In his essay " Vorcticism," Pound explained:

> The image is the poet's pigment; with that in mind you can go ahead and apply Kandinsky, you can transpose his chapter on the language of form and colour and apply it to the writing of verse. As I cannot rely on your having read Kandinsky's *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*, I must go on with my autobiography.[35]

Pound was, at this time, profoundly interested in the visual arts and in painters and sculptors whom he knew personally. He admired and encouraged the young struggling French sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and later wrote a memoir of this young artist who perished in the first world war.[36] As early as 1908, Pound wrote to William Carlos Williams of his desire in poetry to "paint the thing as I see it." [37] In his article "Vorticism," Pound wrote of his perception, three years earlier, that one could express emotion with a "language of colour." Thus Pound asserted:

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[33] Mellow, *Stein*, p. 199, quoted from an article by Carl van Vechten in *Trend*, 1914.

[34] Sadler, " After Gauguin," see above.

[35] Ezra Pound, " Vorticism," *Fortnightly Review*, Sept. 1, 1944, p. 96; reprinted in *Ezra Pound: A Critical Anthology*, J. P. Sullivan, ed. (Baltimore: Penguin, 1970), p. 51.

> ...when I came to Kandinsky's chapter on the language of form and colour, I found little that was new to me. I only felt that someone else understood what I understood, and had written it out very clearly. It seems natural to me that an artist should have just as much pleasure in an arrangement of planes or in a pattern of figures, as in painting portraits of fine ladies, or in the portraying the Mother of God as the symbolists bid us.[38]

Ezra Pound's enthusiasm for Kandinsky's ideas and for the "new arts" in general proved important for his friend William Carlos Williams, as well as for countless other artists and writers who must have read his article "Vorticism" in 1914.

Williams met Pound in his dormitory in Philadelphia when he was a medical student and Pound was an undergraduate student at the University of Pennsylvania around 1902.[39] At this time, Williams later claimed, "I was still undecided whether or not I should become a painter." [40] Williams' other close friend in these years was the painter Charles Demuth whom he met "over a dish of prunes at Mrs. Chain's boarding house." [41] Demuth, at this time, was in attendance at the Drexel Institute in Philadelphia where he studied art. These early friendships were important and lasting ones for Williams.

Williams was well acquainted with others in the Stieglitz circle besides Demuth, including Stieglitz himself. He was particularly friendly with Marsden Hartley. Stieglitz even sent Williams a copy of Hartley's book of essays *Adventure in the Arts* when it was published in 1922.[42] Williams describes in his autobiography how he was inspired to write his poem "The Great Figure" while on his way to visit Hartley in his studio:

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[36] Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska, a Memoir* (New York: New Directions, 1961).

[37] Sullivan, ed., letter from Pound to Williams, Oct. 21, 1908, *Pound*, p. 34.

[38] Sullivan, ed., *Pound*, pp. 51-52.

[39] William Carlos Williams, *The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams* (New York: Random House, 1948), p. 51.

[40] Williams, *Autobiography*, p. 52.

[41] Williams, *Autobiography*, p. 52.

> As I approached his number I heard a great clatter of bells and the roar of a fire engine passing the end of the street down Ninth Avenue. I turned just in time to see a golden figure 5 on a red background flash by. The impression was so sudden and forceful that I took a piece of paper out of my pocket and wrote a short poem about it.[43]

Williams' poem "The Great Figure" was published in 1921 in a volume entitled *Sour Grapes*. This poem inspired his friend Charles Demuth to create a painting based on the poem. It is evident from a letter Williams wrote to Demuth that he gave the painter much specific advice on how to paint his poem which became one of Demuth's poster portraits and was called, *I saw the Figure 5 in Gold* after the third line of the poem. Demuth completed this painting in 1928. Among other things, Williams suggested to Demuth:

> It needs some new sweep of imagination through the whole to make it one. It is no longer one but—not even 5. It is all shaken up...my own feeling, as I told you over the phone, is to take hint from the picture itself. That is to use the overlapping of planes, one contour passing partly into the next. If that were used more through the solid red center (as it is used among the figures which surround it) the whole would gain by a unity of treatment which would cast a unity of feeling over it all....[44]

Williams' comments to Demuth are particularly interesting as they demonstrate the poet's great interest in painting and in visual expression in general. It has even been suggested that Williams may have "regarded his words as paint."[45]

By the time Williams wrote "The Great Figure," he had already paid tribute to Wassily Kandinsky in his "Prologue" to *Kora in Hell*:

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[42] Bram Dijkstra, *Williams*, p. 86, letter of Jan. 12, 1922, Williams to Stieglitz, thanking him for the book and saying he would visit "291" soon. The letter also indicates that the two were well acquainted.

[43] Williams, *Autobiography*, p. 172.

[44] John C. Thirlwall, ed., *The Selected Letters of William Carlos Williams* (New York: McDowell, 1957), letter of May 12, 1928, to Charles Demuth.

[45] Dijkstra, *Williams*, p. 79.

Improvisations published in 1920. Williams' subtitle of this work, *Improvisations*, is a direct reference to Kandinsky's definition in his treatise of improvisation as "a largely unconscious, spontaneous expression of inner character, non-material in nature."[46] Around 1917, for about a year, Williams had begun to record quickly his imaginary images that he retained at the end of the day. From these experiments in automatic writing, some examples were later selected and published along with a prologue as *Kora in Hell: Improvisations*.[47] In his prologue Williams remarked: "If the inventive imagination must look, as I think, to the field of art for its richest discoveries today it will best make its way by compass and follow no path."[48] Williams later paraphrased Kandinsky's "axioms for the artist":

> Every artist has to express himself.
> Every artist has to express his epoch.
> Every artist has to express the pure and eternal
> qualities of the art of all men.[49]

Williams then commented on the above: "So we have the fish and the bait, but the last rule holds three hooks at once—not for the fish, however."[50]

Williams did not have to look very far to find Kandinsky's *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* for he certainly read the first number of *Blast* dated June 20, 1914, where Wadsworth's review "Inner Necessity" included the above passages to which Williams referred.[51] As Pound co-edited *Blast* with Wyndham Lewis, there can be no doubt that Williams (who carried on a correspondence with Pound) read both issues. Williams mentioned Pound several times in the Prologue to *Kora in Hell*; he even wrote of Pound's term "Vortex," which is not surprising for he certainly would have read Pound's essay "Vorticism" in 1914.[52] Thus, Williams was certainly familiar with Pound's favorable opinion of Kandinsky's ideas.

[46] Kandinsky, *Concerning*, p. 77.

[47] Dijkstra, *Williams*, p. 69.

[48] William Carlos Williams, *Kora in Hell: Improvisations*, Prologue, reprinted in *Imaginations* (New York: New Directions, 1970).

[49] Williams, p. 26.

[50] Williams, p. 26.

[51] Wadsworth, "Inner Necessity," p. 119. Williams even spelled "Ueber" as Wadsworth did with an "e" in the place of the umlaut.

[52] Williams, p. 16.

Williams' use of the term "Improvisations" indicates that his knowledge of Kandinsky went beyond Wadsworth's article in *Blast*, for this term is not mentioned in "Inner Necessity." Williams, of course, had seen the Armory Show in 1913 with Kandinsky's *Improvisation No. 27* and he had most likely seen this painting again at Stieglitz's gallery.[53] It was probably Marsden Hartley, however, who put Williams in touch with Kandinsky's treatise and most likely the Russian's volume of poems *Klänge* published in 1912, which Hartley, who also wrote poetry, may have owned.[54] Hartley's friendship with Williams at this time is documented by their correspondence, Williams' autobiography, and by their shared friendship with Charles Demuth. Hartley wrote to Williams on August 27, 1920, commenting on Williams' book *Kora in Hell: Improvisations*, which he said he liked, particularly the "spiritual" quality of the "Improvisations," although he found the prologue somewhat demonstrative and personal.[55] Hartley's mildly negative response to the namedropping and criticism of various contemporary writers in Williams' prologue is understandable. His appreciation of the Kandinsky-inspired improvisations is also predictable. It is likely that Hartley had discussed Kandinsky's ideas and improvisations with Williams previously and he probably approved of the use to which Williams put Kandinsky's concept. Williams later wrote that the improvisation was what he liked to do most of all.[56]

A careful reading of Williams' poem "The Great Figure" raises the question of whether he was familiar with Kandinsky's poems published in *Klänge* [sounds]. Williams' poem briefly preserves the experience he described later in his autobiography:

Among the rain
and lights

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[53] Williams, *Autobiography*, p. 134, mentions going to the Armory Show in 1913 but then confuses the Independents' show of 1917 which had Duchamp's urinal sculpture "fountain" signed by R. Mutt.

[54] Wassily Kandinsky, *Klänge* (Munich, 1912). Letter, Nov. 26, 1974, to author from Mrs. William Carlos Williams indicates that he probably did own Kandinsky's book. Hartley may have had copies of Kandinsky's poems from newspaper reviewers such as that Rönnebeck sent Gertrude Stein.

[55] Marsden Hartley to William Carlos Williams, unpublished, August 27, 1920, Lockwood Memorial Library, State University of New York at Buffalo, poetry collection, Buffalo, N. Y.

[56] Mike Weaver, *William Carlos Williams: The American Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1971), p. 42, refers to unpublished undated letter from Williams to Jim Higgins.

I saw the figure 5
in gold
on a red firetruck
moving
with weight and urgency
tense
unheeded
to gong clangs
siren howls
and wheels rumbling
through the dark city.[57]

Although Kandinsky's prose-poems were not then translated from the German, Williams, who had spent a year (1909-1910) studying pediatrics in Leipzig, could have read them with no difficulty.[58] Kandinsky, in his poem "Anders" or "Different," had written of a numerical figure describing its color and the color of its background:

> There was a big figure 3—white on dark brown.
> Its upper loop was the same size as the lower loop.
> So many people thought. And this upper Loop
> was
> SOMEWHAT, SOMEWHAT, SOMEWHAT
> larger than the lower one.
> This figure 3 always looked to the left—never to the right.
> At the same time it looked slightly downward, for only in
> appearance did this figure stand perfectly straight. In reality,
> not easily
> discernible, the upper
> SOMEWHAT, SOMEWHAT, SOMEWHAT
> larger part inclined to the left
> And so this big white figure 3 always looked to
> the left and a little downward.
> Or perhaps it was different.[59]

As Williams wrote "the figure 5 in gold on a red firetruck," Kandinsky had written "A big figure 3—white on dark brown." Of course, Williams' poem is much briefer and momentary while Kandinsky's poem has longer sentences and is more descriptive. In other prose-poems in *Klänge*, such as "Bassoon," Kandinsky described sounds such as "the beat of horseshoes" and "indifferent tones of a bassoon, moving a long long while in the depths of the void."[60] Williams wrote in "The Great Figure" of the "firetruck moving unheeded to gong clangs." Williams' choice of the word "clangs" for ringing sounds reinforces the relationship of his poem to Kandinsky's prose-poems in *Klänge*. Like Kandinsky, Williams is concerned with both sounds and visual images.

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[57] William Carlos Williams, *Sour Grapes* (New York, 1921).
[58] Williams, *Autobiography*, pp. 109-112.
[59] Kandinsky, *Klänge* (1912), reprinted in Kandinsky, *Concerning*, p. 83.

Perhaps, as is sometimes the case in his autobiography, Williams' memory fails him and he conceived of his poem "The Great Figure" after, rather than before, visiting his friend Hartley. Either way, the definite link of this poem to Marsden Hartley, who was so very interested in Kandinsky's work, makes the possibility of such an influence all the more likely. If Williams did learn from Kandinsky's prose-poems in *Klänge*, he still managed to make his poem "The Great Figure" very much his own and very much the "spontaneous expression" of which Kandinsky had written. Williams certainly benefited from Kandinsky's theories on the nature of artistic invention.

Thus Kandinsky was recognized by those in the vanguard of American modernism in literature as well as in the visual arts. It is not surprising to find that Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams were among those artists who appreciated Kandinsky's contributions to art and literature. If aspects of their art were inspired by Kandinsky's work, they were able to redefine what they found useful in the Russian artist's ideas in terms of their own talents and creativity.

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[60] Kandinsky, *Concerning*, p. 81.

Book Reviews

Four Hundred Songs and Dances from the Stuart Masque edited by Andrew J. Sabol. Providence: Brown University Press, 1977. Pp. xvii + 661. $100.00.

This volume brings together all the surviving music, both vocal and instrumental, from the Stuart masque. It represents a phenomenal achievement: Andrew Sabol has edited, collated, rationalized and produced keyboard versions of fifty-one songs and choruses and hundreds of dances. Some of this music has been available before now, thanks largely to Sabol's previous and much more modestly produced book *Songs and Dances for the Stuart Masque* (Brown University Press, 1959). But a good deal of it is new, and derives from a bewildering variety of printed and manuscript sources. The material is often confusing, the manuscripts maddeningly uninformative, and most of the dance tunes cannot be related to any particular production or composer. Sabol makes his way through this morass with energy and good sense, and manages to reduce it to something like order. Charts, chronologies and concordances are provided; there is a historical and critical introduction, an account of the sources, a summary of literature on the masque as well as a detailed and extensive bibliography. Eyewitness accounts of two Jacobean masques are included in an appendix—the second, of Jonson's *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*, disappointingly excerpted, and omitting a good deal of important material. A final appendix reprints a list of dances with instructions for their performance from an early seventeenth century commonplace book. More of this sort of documentation could easily have been included, and Sabol's choices seem excessively arbitrary—there is, for example, magnificent documentation of Shirley's *Triumph of Peace*, a work for which a good deal of music remains.

As a collection of masque music, the volume is necessarily spotty. Many of the most important productions at the Stuart court have no surviving music at all; of the 53 masques for which some music is preserved, 33 are represented by only one or two pieces. For 17 masques not a single dance can be identified. These statistics give a good sense of both the importance of the volume—it is literally all we have—and of the frustratingly ephemeral nature of the art it preserves. Sabol's work has made what survives magnificently available. Every student of English Renaissance culture is in his debt.

Having said so much, I hope I will not be considered churlish if I go on to express some reservations. Sabol's Introduction undertakes its history and critique of masque music much too briefly and casually. The writing is breathless; too often admiring and imprecise characterizations ("sheer brilliance," "sophisticated grandeur") are used to do the work of analysis and assessment. The generalizations are broad but the purview is limited: far too few kinds of evidence are taken into account. No use at all has been made of the most important body of material relating to the Stuart masque, the Inigo Jones drawings, nor of other visual material, and far too little of the information contained in the

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compendious records of inventories, bills and payments. These, and the too infrequently cited eyewitness accounts, bring us closer to the realities of the masque's nature than do poets' texts or theorists' assertions. One example may suffice: Sabol is rhapsodic about how "the masquers function always as an identically accoutred group, moving simultaneously in sober splendor" (p. 12). This view of the masque can certainly be derived from Jonson's or Campion's or Daniel's texts. But if we look a little further, we get a different picture. From Jones's costume designs and his annotations to them we learn how much freedom the royal and noble participants in these supreme assertions of artistocratic community and independence had in the creation of their own costumes. They paid for them; their own dressmakers made them. They were based on Jones's drawings, but the aristocratic masquer adapted the final outfit to his or her own taste. A startling piece of evidence is preserved in the material relating to Jonson's *Hymenaei*. Jonson's text describes the ladies' garments in detail: the masquers were to be identically dressed, in a very elaborate costume with a double skirt. The outer layer was to be of carnation striped with silver, the inner of light blue cloth-of-silver laced with gold. Now it happens that three ladies who danced in this masque had their portraits painted in costume. Two accord closely with Jonson's description; the third, however, shows not a double but a single skirt. That was how this noble masquer preferred to appear.

Sabol's introductory essay is for the most part descriptive and historical, and despite its limitations it is genuinely informative. But readers who intend to move on to the the music and play through the keyboard realizations should be warned: nothing in the Introduction prepares one for the sheer tedium of most of the pieces. Of course an editor is entitled to place his material in the best light he can, and Sabol may, in any case, wish to argue that I am simply deaf to the charms of this music. But I think there is a real critical point here, which has either got lost or is being avoided: the masque did not bring out the best in its composers. The four Campion songs included here strike me as significantly less interesting than most of what appears in Campion's books of *Ayres*, and Campion considered only two of them suitable for preservation as independent songs, one with a new set of words. (It should be noted that this is not two out of four, but two out of all the songs in all of Campion's masques, most of the music for which he chose not to preserve in any form at all). Ferrabosco's music for Jonson's early masques earns judicious praise from Sabol; to me it sounds for the most part routine, as I compare it with Byrd, or Dowland, or the Campion of the best *Ayres*. Things start to get more interesting around 1620, after the innovations of Nicholas Lanier, a composer who seems to have had some genuinely new ideas about the musical form of the masque; and the Caroline examples of William and Henry Lawes, even when they fail to satisfy as musical compositions, reveal—to me at least—a good deal more vitality and variety. Now Sabol may feel that I have got this all wrong, and he has certainly lived with the music a good deal longer and more happily than I have. But something about his critical methods fails to inspire confidence. His account of his material relies too heavily on indulgent descriptions and quotations from contemporary enthusiasts to be either very helpful or entirely persuasive.

Sabol's claims, moreover, are not on the whole for the music but for the dances—their richness and complexity, their metaphorical virtue as an imitation of cosmic order, the fact that they were the very *raison d'être* of the masque. Such claims are arguable, and I shall return to them; but I feel bound to point out at once that the volume brings us no nearer to being able to assess them. To begin with, once again much too much evidence is simply ignored. To illustrate the complexity of Jacobean choreography, Sabol quotes Daniel's account of a masque dance, "with great majesty and arte, consisting of diuers straines, fram'd unto motions circular, square, triangular, with other proportions exceeding rare and full of variety" (p. 11). But one man's complexity is another man's nonsense: Bacon, patron and eyewitness of innumerable masques, considered the sort of figure dances Daniel describes "a childish curiosity"—the charge appears in the essay *Of Masques and Triumphs*, surely an essential text, and one that is cited nowhere in the volume. But the problems raised by the book's claims go deeper than even this suggests, because Sabol has not in fact recovered dances from his manuscripts, but only the music for them, and one can no more reconstruct choreography from dance music than one can reconstruct the words of a song from its setting. Certain formal elements are apparent from the music, though not as many as one could wish: for dances that are not among the standard social types (galliard, coranto, etc.) the manuscripts preserve no information about tempo whatever; most of the pieces are exceedingly brief, notes for dances really, and one gets no sense from what survives of how the pieces were elaborated to produce the hours of entertainment we know they provided, or even of how long any individual dance lasted. None of this is Sabol's fault, but it does mean that his claims are strongest when he isn't bound by the evidence, and it does lead at least this seeker after the true nature of the masque to wonder whether the Introduction doesn't spend so much time talking about dance in order to avoid having to talk about the music.

And, indeed, this brings me to a genuine oddity about the book. Sabol is committed to the position that dance was the chief element and the *raison d'être* of the masque—his Introduction begins by rejecting the rival claims of Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones to responsibility for the "soul" of the form. Yet Sabol's whole sense of the masque is derived, as I have suggested, exclusively from its texts. Poets and theorists are continually being cited to show how we ought to be thinking of these entertainments. Thus Elyot is quoted quoting Plato to the effect that music and dance lead the soul "to embrace the divine principles of order"; Arbeau's *Orchésographie* makes dance a "dumb rhetoric"; in Jonson's *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*, "Dancing is a exercise/not only shows the movers wit,/but maketh the beholder wise,/as he hath powre to rise to it." In Campion's *Squire's Masque*, "the distribution of the twelve masquers into four groups of three...underscores the traditional symbolism, Pythagorean and Christian, of the number four as the pattern of the cosmos, or mundane sphere." And so forth. A particularly persuasive citation is included from Davies' *Orchestra*, about dance imitating the order of God's creation and partaking of the most profound mysteries of religion and state.

This is just the sort of thing that makes me distrust Sabol's discussion. Had the argument in *Orchestra* been followed to its conclusion, it would have been revealed as a courtly lover's trick, a temptation to impiety and unchasteness.

The invitation to dance is quite properly *rejected* by the moral and clear-sighted Penelope. Sabol knows this as well as I do; he has simply chosen to ignore it. But why? Why take the courtly lover's word for the truth about masque dances rather than Penelope's? What, indeed, is the value of Davies' evidence at all? Why is Jonson's or Campion's testimony to the significance of masque dances valid, while Jonson's or Jones's claims for the importance of poetry and design are set aside? There are profound problems of methodology here. The masque was an aristocratic entertainment, a game through which a particular social group idealized itself and asserted its community, power and independence. Is there any evidence that the participants ever thought about the enterprise they were so extravagantly engaged in as Jonson or Arbeau or Davies' courtly tempter did? Courtiers who were eyewitnesses have left us a number of admiring accounts of masque dancing; they stress social grace and athletic ability, but I do not know of a single one that says anything about the motions of the soul or the movement of the spheres.

My point is that all arguments that maintain that the masque was "essentially" one of its components rather than any of the others are tendentious. The masque was always a mixed genre, and its inventors and its participants always saw it differently. The exchequer accounts surely record quite definitively what the court thought most important in the preparation of its masques. In a typical year, the poet and designer would be paid £50 each—this was an enormous sum, almost as much as Jonson's annual pension of 100 marks (a little over £60), and enough to live on for a year in Jacobean London. The composer was lucky if he got £20: this was the annual wage of a skilled workman, about a shilling per day. (The one exception was Nicholas Lanier, to whom at least one handsome payment of £100 is recorded; but whether this testifies to his extraordinary qualities as a composer or to a recognition of his numerous other services to the court is uncertain). The choreographer was even less well rewarded than a skilled workman. The court paid for quality, and assumed a hierarchy in the arts of the masque. Poet and designer were securely at the top of the hierarchy.

I hope it is not necessary for me to add that nothing I have said here is intended to denigrate the tremendous value of Sabol's work. For anyone interested in the masque, that quintessential expression of the culture of the English Renaissance, the volume is indispensable.

STEPHEN ORGEL

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Dramatic Identities and Cultural Tradition: Studies in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries by G. K. Hunter. New York: Barnes and Noble Books. Pp. xiv + 362. $28.50.

This collection of essays, all of which were originally published between 1954 and 1974, are arranged explicitly according to topic and implicitly according to certain critical assumptions about Elizabethan drama. They fall into three categories: 1) "the theatrical definition of the Elizabethan audience's English identity"; 2) the manner in which this identity modified literary traditions; and 3) the dramatic structures "used to predetermine meaning" for the Elizabethan audience. The first section contains Professor Hunter's well known essays, "Elizabethans and Foreigners," "English Folly and Italian Vice," and "Italian Tragicomedy on the English Stage." The second deals with the so-called Senecan influence on Elizabethan drama, *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Hamlet*, and also includes pieces on Bradley and Eliot. The last section contains his essays on the structure of *Henry IV*, of *Doctor Faustus* and of Shakespeare's early tragedies.

Generally, Hunter seeks to correct the claims of an earlier generation of critics who singlemindedly described literary history in terms of mere chronology, who ignored the power of the native tradition in favor of a classical one, and who failed to understand the pervasive theological underpinnings to Elizabethan culture. Against these views, some of which held sway up through the 1950's, he rightly insists on "complicating" literary history, on arguing for a Christian basis for much of the drama, and on offering a view of Elizabethan culture that is both more complex and conservative in assimilating various social and literary influences. Because he relies primarily on intellectual historical documents and literary texts for his cultural model, he is quite good on matters that involve literary representation and literary influence. Because he does not question the function these representations served, however, he does not discuss how the literary representations might have been meaningful as symbolic resolutions for conflicting cultural values and social norms. Moreover many of the earlier essays in this volume are clearly dated: they were part of a debate which has been resolved in the last ten to fifteen years, thanks to scholars such as Professor Hunter, and in turn form the basis for critical discussions which require more complex and sophisticated readings of Elizabethan literature in its cultural framework.

LEONARD TENNENHOUSE

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Visionary Poetics: Milton's Tradition and His Legacy by Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1979. Pp. xxiv + 324. $18.50.

In *Visionary Poetics: Milton's Tradition and His Legacy*, Joseph Wittreich argues that many of our greatest poets, including Spenser, Milton, Blake, and Shelley, "have taken from John's Apocalypse the code for their art—a whole aesthetic system, together with those supports, structural and ideological, that any formally recognized genre lends to a poet" (p. 4). Milton's poetry, he emphasizes, is not "classical," but rather "prophetic," and attempts to return poetry to "its unperverted model, which is the Bible" (p. 14), and, more specifically, to the Book of Revelation.

In the first of two long and detailed chapters, Wittreich examines "the idea of prophecy," drawing upon Renaissance as well as recent commentaries on Revelation, and explores the nature and purpose of the "prophetic book." He also deals with pictorialism, "generic mixture," obscurity, allusive techniques, and the relations between prophecy and epic. Prophecy, Wittreich observes, is intended to transform its readers; it is "revolutionary" and "subversive," committed to overturning the present political and aesthetic orders. Epic, on the other hand, is a "conservative" form, written to preserve and commemorate "the collective ideology of the culture producing it" (p. 50). Both Milton and Spenser, states Wittreich, "join prophecy to epic" (p. 57), relying on similiar rhetorical strategies and structures. Milton, however, embraces the revolutionary ideology of prophecy, and endorses the "Christian radicalism" that Spenser "defuses" and "represses."

After reviewing the tradition and influence of prophecy, Wittreich concentrates in chapter two on "Lycidas," the most notable early achievement of Milton's "prophetic voice." His analysis is again wide-ranging and suggestive, beginning with a helpful comparison of "Lycidas" and the companion-poems "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." Wittreich also traces the affinities between pastoral and prophecy (with reference back to Spenser), commenting well on the placement of "Lycidas" in the Edward King volume and also in the 1645 and 1673 editions of Milton's poems. There is still more in this chapter, including a comprehensive account of the structure, prosody, and rhyme-scheme of the poem, and a final section that moves forward from "Lycidas" to survey Milton's last poems as rich variations on the "Revelation model."

Visionary Poetics is an important book not only because of its provocative argument for Milton's "prophetic" role, but also because it signals—along with recent books by Christopher Hill, Boyd Berry, William Kerrigan, and others—a movement away from seeing Milton as a "Christian humanist" poet. It is difficult to generalize about a complex (and heavily populated) field like Milton studies. But during the past few years, we have witnessed a sustained effort to displace the work of Douglas Bush, C. S. Lewis, A. S. P. Woodhouse, and others—the great and influential generation of Miltonists who studied the poet as a spokesman for humanism and orthodoxy. New, highly-charged terms are now used to describe Milton; he is "radical," "heretical," "revolutionary." Rather than supporting the "Christian tradition"—Hill has even questioned whether such a tradition ever existed (*Milton and the English Revolution*, p. 3)—Milton is seen as one of its most powerful opponents, and as the precursor of the Romantic revolutionaries.

But while Wittreich's achievement in *Visionary Poetics* is admirable, his book does call for some sharp discriminations. His case for the "prophetic" influence in Milton's poetry is persuasive, but perhaps he brushes aside too quickly the poet's classical interests and values (scarcely a word is said on their behalf); and, in a few places, the argument is sketchy and imcomplete, or else overzealously schematic. In addition, many of Wittreich's critical tactics are, I think, ill-considered and self-indulgent. Readers of his previous book, *Angel of Apocalypse: Blake's Idea of Milton* (Madison, 1975), will recall Wittreich's dogged pursuit of every detail and scholarly reference. He persists in this habit in *Visionary Poetics*, and his argument sometimes breaks down or becomes lost as he busily gathers all the relevant (and irrelevant) testimony of others. Let me concentrate on a short section for my examples: on page 116, Octavio Paz is reverently quoted to give authority to a vapid point about the "nothingness of death"; on pages 117-18, Wittreich tackles Louis Kampf's objections to the genre of "Lycidas"—objections that, first, have been presented by much better critics than Kampf, and that, second, have in fact been discredited many times before; finally, on page 121, Kathleen Williams, Harold Toliver, Angus Fletcher, Thomas Hobbes, and the eighteenth-century scholar Philip Neve are assembled and quoted to help advance a few simple points about pastoral poetry. Wittreich is an intelligent and careful scholar, and I am perplexed by his comically over-scrupulous citations and momentary displays of bad judgment. Do we always need this kind of solemn buttressing of the obvious: "Any one of Milton's last poems, as Frederick von Schlegel perceived of *Paradise Lost*, is marked by 'incompleteness'" (p. 193)? Equally remarkable are references to Caudwell, Barthes, and Mao-Tse Tung.

Visionary Poetics is also marred by occasionally reductive readings of Spenser's and Milton's poems (see, for example, p. 62), where the "Revelation model" is deployed to hammer the verse into "prophetic" shape. I am also uncomfortable with passages (pp. 76, 243) that devalue Spenser for failing, in Wittreich's view, to reach the "revolutionary" heights attained by Milton. Wittreich's concern for "historical" and "contextual" criticism (pp. xv, xxi) is commendable, but perhaps his own book is not quite "historical" enough. He does not fully consider, for instance, whether Milton's understanding of prophecy developed in significant ways during his career. At the time of "Lycidas" and the early prose works, Milton believed that his hopes for England's political and religious regeneration would soon be realized, and that he would himself "perhaps be heard" celebrating God's promise "in new and lofty measures" (*Of Reformation*, 1641). But by the second edition of *The Readie and Easie Way* (April, 1660), Milton's optimism had disappeared, and in the last paragraph of this tract, he refers to the prophet Jeremiah in the context of an attack on those who joyously greet the King, "choosing them a captain back to Egypt." Near the end of his second chapter, Wittreich states: "Waiting for Apocalypse—that was Milton's posture both when he completed 'Lycidas' and *Paradise Lost* and when he published his brief epic to which is added *Samson Agonistes*" (p. 212). But there are different attitudes towards "waiting," and Wittreich underestimates, I believe, Milton's growing doubts about his audience and its commitment to "revolution." Much of Wittreich's historical criticism is excellent, but if he intends to use terms like "revolutionary" and "radical" in his account of the prophetic Milton, he will have to be even more "historical" and discuss Milton's career as a politician and prose polemicist. To celebrate Milton for his political radicalism seems to me a questionable, if not an empty gesture, when his politics are examined as part of an "asethetic" system, and described in literary, rather than truly historical, terms.

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On Swift's Poetry by John Irwin Fischer. Gainesville, Florida: University Presses of Florida, 1978. Pp. 207. $10.00.

The Poetry of Jonathan Swift: Allusion and the Development of a Poetic Style by Peter J. Schakel. Madison and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978. Pp. x + 218. $25.00.

These two studies of Swift's verse, appearing a year after Nora Crow Jaffe's book, *The Poet Swift,* and amidst a rash of journal articles and MLA seminar papers on the subject, attest to the sudden collective revelation in critical circles that, Dryden (if the often repeated quotation ascribed to him is true) be damned, Swift was indeed a poet—one, moreover, of significance and distinction. Needless to say, it is a circumstance to be applauded that so extensive a body of writings by so major a writer is now finally being recovered and accorded its due, given a recognition without which any study of Swift must necessarily be deficient and incomplete. At the same time, a new set of problems has been created by this sudden enthusiastic celebration of Swift's poetical talents and by the ensuing rush to provide critical validation for his poetical output, to legitimize it as an officially recognized part of Swift's canon. For the earlier fiction of Swift the non-poet (or in any case the insignificant poetic trifler) we are now being offered the myth of Swift the Poet: the myth, that is, of the meticulous, self-conscious craftsman religiously dedicated to the careful cultivation and development of his poetic art. Swift's verse writings are thereby rendered fitting subject matter for studies of the growth of a poet's mind or the unfolding of a poetic sensibility or the "Development of a Poetic Style": studies which by their very nature direct our attention away from the fact that Swift's poetry, however substantial, possesses no privileged status within his canon—the fact that the poetry continually attests to its own limitations as art, to the inability of poetic forms and fictions to create a transcendent world that can replace the messiness and turbulence of reality. It is perhaps inevitable—in any case understandable—that, in their desire to counter the earlier conception of Swift's verses as mere playful trifles or bagatelles, the recent books on his poetry tend to minimize (if not actually ignore) the way in which such terms, along with Swift's self-ironic, demystifying, mockingly reductive comments on his own verses, including his periodic reminders that they were amusements intended for private circulation or mere scribbles fit only for the fire, point to an essential aspect of their character by underscoring the fact, not that they are actually trivial or inconsequential, but that they were conceived and written as something other than high art in the sense other eighteenth-century writers like Pope would have defined it. That so large a proportion of Swift's poetry consists of broadsides, adaptations of popular ballads, street cries, and the like tends to suggest as much also. The profoundly personal and occasional nature of Swift's verse as a whole—its inextricable links to a particular place and moment in history—renders it fundamentally resistant to any form of New Critical approach (however modified or disguised) which brings to bear assumptions concerning art's transcendence of life, its autonomy from both the stuff of everyday personal existence and from concrete historical realities.

Fischer's book is in various respects a useful study which succeeds in identifying certain important aspects of Swift's poetry, such as its "radically dramatic character" (p. 2) and the extent to which it exposes the grounds of its own being as well as the bases of its own judgments, but as a whole the book suffers from the kind of methodological distortions suggested above. Fischer finds in the verse recurring celebrations of art's transcendent power. Thus in a poem like *Vanbrug's House* Swift is seen to "affir[m] his faith in the enduring capacity of human art to participate in that harmony which Amphion knew" (p. 88), while lines from *On Poetry*: *A Rapsody* express "Swift's belief that poetry is a vocation, requires heavenly influence, and is, indeed, the rarest and most graced of callings" (p. 184). These contentions are part of a broader view of the poetry which emphasizes traditional moral and religious as well as poetic values, all three being depicted as capable of resolving the struggles and tensions of empirical reality. Fischer sees in Swift's verse the enactment of a spiritual drama manifested in the movement from the railing satirist's righteous indignation to the humbled Christian's recognition of his own presumption in claiming to be morally superior to his fellow men, which results in poems whose subjects "at once suffer and escape the force of [Swift's] judgment on them" (p. 4). According to Fischer, "Swift's lifelong task was to temper his hubristic sense of righteousness with a standard of judgment larger than himself" as the means through which he could "transmute what was eccentric and potentially destructive in his personality into powerful moral vision" (p. 2). Words like "transmute," "transform," and "transcend" recur throughout Fischer's discussion—consonant with his assertion that "no other canon I know demonstrates so strikingly the ability of a human spirit actually to transform its very character through art and thus to transcend itself" (p. 5)—and suggest, among other things, his inability or unwillingness to deal directly with the concrete (at times graphic) particulars and immediacies of so much of Swift's verse.

Given Fischer's interpretation, virtually any poem's significance is determined by its expression of a basic spiritual drama which remains structurally constant despite the vicissitudes of time and changing historical circumstances: which, regardless of its supposed links to Swift's individual psyche and character, represents a universal human pattern. Fischer's interpretation is thus inherently ahistorical and impersonal, a fact confirmed by the absence of references to those topical issues which play so central a role in Swift's writings, whether poetry or prose, and by his treatment of the *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*, which dismisses Swift's own experience with chronic illness, physical pain, and the fear produced by it, in order to incorporate the poem into the seventeenth-century tradition of meditations on death, with the *Verses* made to reveal a three-part structure consistent with Louis Martz's characterization of "The Poetry of Meditation."

Fischer's thesis, moreover, becomes something of a Procrustean bed with regard both to the selection of poems discussed in the book and to the manner in which they are treated. Although the book implicitly claims to be a study of Swift's poetic canon, its analysis is actually based on the evidence of relatively few poems—those, not surprisingly, which best fit the formula Fischer delineates at the outset. A substantial number of important and characteristically Swiftian poems are never even once mentioned, for Fischer's interpretation largely excludes from consideration entire groups of Swift's political broadsides, coarse travesties, and virulent satires in which the element of attack completely overwhelms the presentation of positive norms and precludes evidence of either spiritual development or artistic resolution. Given Fischer's emphasis on a positive moral vision and on poetic expressions of affirmation in Swift's writings, it is hardly surprising that his discussion covers only a small proportion of Swift's verse, which on the whole, like his prose, is most conspicuous for its subversive energies, its mocking perspectives, and its overturning of exalted ideals. Along with serving as a basis for selection, Fischer's thesis generates a scale of values used to determine the relative worth of individual poems. Those which transform doubts and ambiguities into statements of belief or celebration are automatically put forward as Swift's most important and effective poems, while those lacking such positive resolution are in effect dismissed as inferior endeavors. Thus Fischer declares, "Often enough Swift found nothing to balance against the horror or anger some subject inspired in him. When this happened the effect on his verse was regularly dismal"; and he proceeds to devalue poems like *A Description of a Salamander*, the first version of *Vanbrug's House*, the second version of *Baucis and Philemon*, and *The Virtues of Sid Hamet, the Magician's Rod* on the basis of both their negativism and their supposed aesthetic shortcomings, the two being closely interconnected in Fischer's mind (p. 4). The fact is, however, that verses like *A Description of a Salamander* and *The Virtues of Sid Hamet*, with their grotesque bodily images, their sexual puns, their reliance upon the techniques of travesty, and their explicitly topical character, are far more representative of Swift than the few poems Fischer extols as embodiments of Swift's providential outlook—as "positive, dramatic demonstration[s] of Swift's belief that this is God's world" (p. 195). Fischer's insistence upon seeing only ennobling and immortalizing transformations in Swift's poetry prevents him from appreciating and exploring the ways in which Swift resembles, say, the Earl of Rochester more than Pope by reflecting throughout his writings a conversion downward far more frequently than a conversion upward as well as by growing out of a popular satiric tradition which has little to do with conveying the message that "art survives life" (p. 182). What Fischer deems a highly uncharacteristic vision of despair in *Baucis and Philemon* (p. 94) is actually a typically Swiftian use of parodic transformations, a bitterly mocking revision of Classical myth, which culminates in an emblem of decay, a vivid reminder that life, inextricably bound up as it is with the forces of mutability, cannot be artfully preserved or elevated to a finer tone.

Because it is more successful in relating Swift's poetry to the biographical and historical circumstances in which the poetry is rooted, Peter J. Schakel's book is in general more illuminating than Fischer's, more capable of offering valid and fruitful insights into the verse. Through his study of allusions he explores the topical dimensions of various poems, especially in his chapters on "The Poems on Ireland" and "Poems Personal and Political." And because he views allusions as "useful for considering Swift's own presence in the poems" (p. 5), Schakel brings relevant biographical matters into his discussion of certain verses. In several of his analyses he shows his sensitivity to the often complex ways in which the poems are closely bound up with Swift's life and times. Rightly arguing that works like the *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*, the Delany poems, *An Epistle to a Lady*, and *On Poetry: A Rapsody* "cannot be fully understood or appreciated, individually or as a group, without attention to the context supplied by political writings of the day" (pp. 121-2), he presents discussions of these verses which serve to underscore, through contrast, the basic abstraction of Fischer's interpretations—their disconnectedness from the most immediate and relevant contexts of Swift's poems. A comparison between their respective interpretations of the *Verses on the Death* is particularly helpful in demonstrating the strengths of Schakel's approach over Fischer's; Schakel's identification of the eulogist ("One quite indiff'rent in the Cause") as a member of the anti-Walpole Opposition, while perhaps neither as clearcut nor as significant a revelation as Schakel wants us to believe, is certainly a more appropriate and fruitful view, and one more responsive to the tenor as well as the particular details of the text, than Fischer's conception of the eulogist as "an Old Testament narrator" (p. 175).

There are, however, problems with Schakel's use of allusions to structure his argument and to provide a basis for interpreting Swift's poetry. Schakel's thesis that "Swift's search for truth in verse is revealed to a large extent through allusions, as he raised or reinforced central thoughts by alluding to the works of others" (p. 2), not unlike Fischer's thesis in a different way, makes it necessary for him to concentrate on one particular portion of Swift's verse and automatically eliminates a number of important (but alas, not allusive) poems from his discussion. And here too the thesis functions as a basis for evaluating the artistic worth of individual poems. From Schakel's perspective, Swift's best poems are those which utilize allusions with the greatest skill, complexity, and sophistication, while verses devoid of allusions are relegated to the status of minor pieces, dismissed as immature work, or neglected altogether. The fallacies of such a viewpoint become clear when a verse like "To Lord Harley...on his Marriage"—which happens to be "unified by its allusions to Ovid"—is put forward as a more significant piece than the "Progress" poems and the poems to Stella, which, "witty and vivid though they are...lack the depth and sophistication, in thought and theme, of the marriage poem to Harley" since they "do not rely to any significant extent on allusions" (pp. 99, 100). The typicality and centrality of the Stella poems and the "Progress" poems within the context of Swift's poetic canon, along with their importance as expressions of recurring themes in Swift's writings, is here virtually ignored because of the privileged status Schakel accords the use of allusion, which seems automatically to confer special graces upon a poem.

Other problems are created by Schakel's failure to define the term "allusion" with sufficient clarity and precision. Sometimes it is used to signify contemporary historical events; other times, literary models from the past. As a result, the book is frequently making somewhat abrupt shifts in focus from a discussion of Classical satire to an examination of eighteenth-century political affairs. To be sure, these two concerns are not necessarily unrelated and certainly not mutually exclusive, but in each case, depending upon how the word "allusion" is defined, we perceive Swift in a somewhat different light, on the one hand as a traditional Augustan writer looking to literary models from the past for his inspiration, on the other hand as a man deeply preoccupied with his contemporary situation, responding in his verse to concrete, living realities more than to universal truths handed down from the past. It would have been helpful had Schakel at least acknowledged the different emphasis in interpretation growing out of these two kinds of allusions and perhaps explored the relationship between them insofar as Swift was concerned.

By the same token, and to an even greater extent, it would have greatly helped to clarify Schakel's argument if he had defined his conception of allusion in relation (or contrast) to Reuben Brower's study of Pope and "The Poetry of Allusion," particularly since his subtitle is likely to evoke associations with the latter in the reader's mind. Schakel does note at the outset that "An approach to Swift's allusions must not be patterned on the methods critics have developed for the poems of Alexander Pope" (p. 4), but he proceeds to identify these methods with Earl Wasserman rather than Brower, whose name does not appear at all in this opening discussion. It turns out that the distinction Schakel is making here is between the complexity and subtlety of Pope's allusions on the one hand, and the explicitness of Swift's allusions on the other: "Swift was rarely subtle about including allusions; usually, he footnoted them or even mentioned them without the poem itself. To a great extent, then, the important thing in a study of Swift's poetry is not the *discovery* of allusions, but the consideration of their *use* in the poems" (p. 4). Schakel's observation is probably true for the most part, but it is also somewhat beside the point since the central issue involved here is not the degree of subtlety or explicitness but the specific nature of the allusions and the way each poet adapts, adheres to, alters, or subverts his models, which can tell us a great deal about the poet's historical, ideological, and literary outlook. When Schakel later touches upon certain of these questions in his Chapter III, "Thoughts Borrowed from Virgil and Horace," he makes some interesting and important points about Swift's use of Horatian models and its difference from Pope's adaptations: "There is little in Swift of Pope's sense of identity with Horace, of the almost reverent treatment of the master. Pope alters his situations to fit Horace; Swift alters Horace to fit his situations.... Swift's relationship with Horace is totally receptive: he takes from Horace, uses him, turns him about with little reverence or respect, and gives back nothing in return" (p. 82). Given such insightful and provocative comments, one could only wish that they seemed less isolated and offhand—that they were part of a more extensive and systematic exploration of the relationship both between Swift and Horace and between Swift and Pope in their respective stances toward the formal satiric tradition that Horace represents.

It should be noted, in conclusion, that Schakel too embraces the myth of Swift the Poet, as is clear from his recurring references to "Swift's development as a poet" and "Swift's growth and maturation as a poet" (p. 5). Swift's own development is paralleled by that of his poetry, which, despite Schakel's emphasis on allusions, is seen in many ways as a self-contained, autonomous body with its own principles of internal coherence and growth. Hence there is in Schakel's interpretation a heavily teleological bias, with Swift's earlier poems invariably being viewed as adumbrations of later ones, as stages in a poet's steady march along the road to poetic maturity. This is confirmed by the repeated assertions that "Swift's poetic style has begun to move toward what it will be at its best" (p. 37), that "there has been a decisive step forward in his development as a poet" (p. 41), that a particular poem (in this case *Vanbrug's House*) "indicates the directions his poetry would take in the future" (p. 42), and that "The ingredients of Swift's mature poetry are already present in 1708, awaiting only further practice and an increasingly sophisticated use of sources and allusions" (p. 37). Such a view necessarily emphasizes the primacy, self-sufficiency, and internal symmetries of art over the urgencies, unexpected intrusions, and disjunctions of life. True to the implications of this view, Schakel in the final analysis cannot accept the topicality and particularity of Swift's verse on their own terms, but instead seems to feel the need to legitimize them in terms of traditional artistic values such as "breadth, complexity, and universality" (p. 4). Thus the first version of *Vanbrug's House* is denigrated because "The focus is narrow, dealing only with a temporary, local situation and lacking the universal implications that give poetry lasting interest" (p. 33) while the final version is praised because it demonstrates the "use of allusions or of an external source to expand an initially local or personal situation or incident into a significant statement on art and morality" (p. 41). Here again Swift's poetry has been assimilated into the realm of high art, transcendent vision, and universal truth. I personally look forward to the appearance of a critical study of Swift which is as skeptical of art's healing, immortalizing power as Swift himself was, and which does not find it necessary to apologize for or dismiss poems "dealing only with a temporary, local situation" because it recognizes that neither Swift himself nor his writing can be separated from—or elevated above—such a situation.

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Jane Austen's Novels: Social Change and Literary Form by Julia Prewitt Brown. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1979. Pp. 185. $10.00.

For Julia Prewitt Brown, in this lively and innovative study, Jane Austen is as revolutionary an author "in her own way" as Mary Wollstonecraft (p. 154). The claim is not supported by a comparative study of Austen's fictional predecessors and contemporaries, as Marilyn Butler's contrasting claim for an essentially conservative author is, in *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*. Instead, Brown relies on a few secondary sources, such as Lawrence Stone and Mary Beard, to argue her rather general thesis that Austen's fiction records the shift from a tradition-directed to an inner-directed society (p. 19). In such a society women were aware both of the pressures of making financially advantageous marriages and of a new freedom of personal choice. Jane Austen's importance as a historical novelist, then, has little to do with the Napoleonic wars, but stems from her analysis of a particular phase of feminine consciousness, characterized by "a generational definition of moral life, a concern for the actual and immediate quality of social existence, a belief in human interdependence, and a value for social cooperation and personal adaptability" (p. 157).

If the last element of this feminine ethos seems hardly revolutionary, and reminds one of the conservative Elinor Dashwood, the effect is intended. Brown's view of Austen's "revolutionary" fiction does not lead her, as one might expect, to endorse Marianne Dashwood's individualism or to value the novels only insofar as they foreshadow the anti-social attitudes of the Brontës. As she nicely observes, Austen clearly distinguishes between the "cooperative integrity" of an Elinor and the "calculating conciliation" of a Lucy Steele, and, at least until *Persuasion*, "the adjustments people make to preserve social harmony [in the novels] are not failures but successes of the spirit" (p. 163).

On the other hand, the author has no truck with readings (such as Graham Hough's) that discover social norms in Austen's fiction. What she calls the "drive toward cooperation" (p. 23) is dictated by anthropological rather than by moral or religious imperatives, and the attitudes one finds in a novel like *Pride and Prejudice* are "unexplained," resembling Freudian taboos as distinct from moral or religious prohibitions (p. 77). Moreover, to the extent that the norms are institutional and therefore, in Austen's society, associated with the male, they are demystified as when, for example, the institutional authority of Collins and Darcy is ironically stripped away.

Such a denial of Austen's genuine socio-moral concerns may be hard for some readers to accept. While it can be argued that Maria Bertram's marriage to Rushworth, as sanctioned by Sir Thomas, "shows the basic materialism and inertia of the society" (p. 21), what is to be made of Knightley, admittedly "Jane Austen's most attractive conservative"? Surely he shows society at its best. Brown's response to this is that Knightley is a realist (as if conservatives were not realists?) who recognizes how badly society can treat its poor and displaced. In *Emma*, however, Knightley not only recognizes the dangers posed to Miss Bates and Harriet Smith but successfully does what he can to prevent them. When Emma insults Miss Bates on Box Hill, Knightley rebukes her; as Brown observes, Emma has violated "the most basic human law ... the protection of the weak" (p. 119). True, such a law may be found in any society "whether barbarous or advanced," but it is not a taboo, and it may be sufficiently "explained" in terms of the golden rule shared by Knightley, Emma and their author.

Brown has more success arguing her case for Jane Austen as a historian of feminine consciousness in the three "novels of satiric realism"—*Sense and Sensibility*, *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*—than in what she terms "the novels of ironic comedy." Her interpretations of characters and scenes in *Pride and Prejudice* are sometimes a little stale—the pompous absurdities of Mary Bennet and Mr. Collins have been too often rehearsed to bear much more going over. And her insistence on the indeterminacy of *Emma* (the character as well as the novel), while according with current objections to fictional closure, seems somewhat strained. One need not insist on the humiliation of Emma Woodhouse to believe that she grows morally through the course of the novel. Concerning the heroine's marriage to Knightley the author seems, in any case, to be of two minds. At one point, she explains the sense of stasis in *Mansfield Park* and *Emma* in terms of "the incestuous marriages with which they end" (p. 99). Yet in the next chapter it is the (presumably healthy) "sexuality" of Emma's relationship with Knightley that is stressed. "Brother and sister! no, indeed."

On *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion* Brown is at her most brilliant and provocative. Her reading of the earlier novel rivals those of Reginald Farrer and Kingsley Amis in the venom of its diatribe. Fanny and Edmund, we are told, "finally emerge as monsters, if only because they overpower the Crawfords so completely.... After the tyranny of victory, questions of moral sincerity or insincerity seem trivial" (p. 100). And in the chapter on *Persuasion* there are many individual interpretations with which one might disagree. It seems hardly likely, for example, that the view we are given of the grotesquely vain Sir Walter Elliot at the start of the novel is Anne Elliot's own view, or that Jane Austen, with her two beloved and successful sailor brothers, was "decidedly satirical" concerning Wentworth's war profiteering. Yet, despite disagreements, many readers are likely to respond favorably to the intelligence and verve of this study, to the general excellence of its stylistic analyses, and to the clarity of its critical formulations. Brown may not have justified her sub-title in terms of original historical research, but she has written a readable and perceptive study that will be of much interest and value to critics of Jane Austen.

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Images of Romanticism: Verbal and Visual Affinities edited by Karl Kroeber and William Walling. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978. Pp. xv + 232. 63 illus. $18.95.

The general subject matter of this book is the network of relationships between literature and the visual arts in the Romantic period, or, more broadly, between word and image in a wide variety of Romantic art forms. The book makes no claim to comprehensiveness or systematic organization, providing something on the order of a miscellany, a series of essays linked only by the notion of "images" in Romantic art. Except for one rather specialized foray into French literature (Jean Starobinski's close analysis of "André Chenier and the Allegory of Poetry") the Romanticism is all English, and except for the opening essay in theory (Rudolf Arnheim's "Space as an Image of Time") the methodology is familiar historicist humanism. Kroeber's and Walling's introduction sounds a muted polemical note in its claim that "the methods of literary criticism most in fashion" (i. e., deconstruction) "are intensely, even desparately, verbal," and therefore of doubtful efficacy in the analysis of pictorial, imagistic, visual, or non-verbal matters. But this claim and its corollary charge that deconstruction leads criticism toward "intellectual abstracting" never becomes a serious part of the argument in the essays which follow, serving instead as simply a fair warning of the shared prejudices of most of the contributors.

It's only fair, then, to make my own prejudices as a reviewer as explicit as possible. I'm totally sympathetic to the subject matter, and to a method which attempts to see a wide variety of art forms "as complexly engaged in a cultural density of particular time, place, and circumstance" (xii). I'm not satisfied, however, that this is all we need, and that "the other approach" inevitably "leads into ever more critical abstraction in the Blakean sense of separation" (xii). It might also just conceivably lead us toward the kind of synthetic hypotheses that could relate the present miscellaneous collection of insights to a coherent and falsifiable theory. It is notable, for instance, that in an anthology so largely devoted to the relationship between painting and poetry in a particular era, no systematic attention is paid to the understanding of that relationship as such. Carl Woodring tells us that Coleridge "with Lessing's *Laokoon* as his starting point...developed a deep distrust of the Horatian adage *ut pictura poesis est*" (p. 98), but does nothing to elaborate or even defend this assertion. Ronald Paulson speaks of "the incompatibility of visual and verbal structures" in Turner's painting (p. 167), but leaves us to wonder whether this incompatibility is paradigmatic or exceptional in Romantic art. In an anthology containing essays that advance general theses about such matters as color perception (Heffernan), the esthetics of the sublime (Hagstrum, Kroeber, Meisel), and the nature of historical understanding (Kroeber), why is there no reflection on institutionalized relations between the various sign systems (verbal, pictorial, musical, architectural, even "natural") in which cultural systems are encoded? One can only hope that the suspicion of deconstruction, semiotics, and other avant garde modes in recent criticism will not become entrenched as a suspicion of theory, abstraction, and generality in general.

In the meantime there is much to commend and to learn from in the present volume. Jean Hagstrum's essay on "Blake and British Art" is a valuable inventory of Blake's immediate forebears and contemporaries that fills a surprising gap in Blake scholarship, and will be a useful starting point for students for many years to come. Carl Woodring tells us exactly "What Coleridge Thought of Pictures," and takes us a long way towards understanding why. Lorenz Eitner provides a useful survey of pictorial treatments of "Cages, Prisons, and Captives in Eighteenth Century Art," although his claim that "the artistic barreness of the subject of 'Liberty' springs from *its very nature*" as "an ideal abstraction" (p. 14; italics mine) strikes one as quite unhistorical (how did "Liberty" *ever* bear fruit as an artistic subject if "its very nature" makes it barren?). L. J. Swingle makes a number of interesting points about "Wordsworthworth's 'Picture of the Mind,'" although one feels that he would have benefitted from some consideration of Cary Nelson's chapter on Wordsworth's pictorialism in *The Incarnate Word*. Swingle's essay seems to operate on the assumption that the "of" in "picture of the mind" means "in" or "belonging to" (thus he refers mainly to the "mind's pictures" in Wordsworth). One wonders how his argument would be modified if he took it more literally as a picture which *represents* the mind.

One of the few essays which attempts a straightforward comparison of particular paintings and literary works is William Walling's "More Than Sufficient Room: Sir David Wilkie and the Scottish Literary Tradition." Walling's comparisons seem quite illuminating at a general level, when he explores Wilkie's, Fergusson's, and Scott's common participation in the crisis of Scottish culture confronting the challenge of London and the continent, but his claims for more particular formal analogies seem rather thin. Wilkie's *Pitlessie Fair* and Fergusson's ballad "Hallow-fair" are likened in "the denial in painting and poem of any secure formal center," a negative and nebulous similarity which could link all too many works of art. Walling's particular distinctions (*Pitlessie Fair* can only picture a drum, while Fergusson's ballad can suggest the sound of it; p. 115) belabor the obvious in a way that requires no further comment.

Perhaps the most interesting and substantial group of essays in the volume is the last five, all of which deal in some way with the work of J. M. W. Turner. Martin Meisel's essay contrasts the way in which the style of Turner and John Martin was employed for theatrical stage effects in Victorian stage shows. This is one of the most original and penetrating essays in the entire volume, opening up fascinating connections between the realms of elite cultural and popular art, and making novel suggestions about the reception of Turner and Martin in terms of psychological theories of taste. The other essays which deal with Turner are, in various degrees, provocative or at least provoking. Only R. F. Storch's reductive psychoanalyzing of Turner (uniting him with Shelley and other Romantics as regressive, schizoid personalities) seems to me totally misguided. James Heffernan's essay on "The English Romantic Perception of Color," while useful in presenting what poets and painters said about color, does not take into account the problem of claiming that this amounts to a history of *perception*, rather than theories about, or representations of perception. Art historians like E. H. Gombrich have been warning against the equation of the history of representation with that of perception for many years, and Heffernan's conclusions should be evaluated with this caution in mind.

The essays which I would most like to argue with—in the context of general praise and approval—are those by Karl Kroeber and Ronald Paulson. Kroeber gets praise for constructing an absolutely convincing case for what he calls "the temporal sublime" in Romantic literature and art, a historicist mode of vision that finds in the uncertainty and obscurity of historical understanding a temporal analogue to the Burkean spatial sublime. He gets criticism for presenting this thesis as a logically exclusive alternative to the "critical cliches of the 1960s and 1970s," the idea that "the primary thrust of Romantic art was toward ... apocalypse" or "transcendence" (p. 149). It is not clear to me why Kroeber's historicism and his "temporal sublime" cannot co-exist quite happily with, and enrich the apocalyptic theory of Romanticism. One feels that to take Kroeber completely seriously on the incompatibility of the two theories would be to make his historicist theory the critical cliche of the 1980s, an oversimplification that would not do justice to the impressive power of his hypothesis.

In a similar way Ronald Paulson's examination of the verbal element in Turner's paintings ("Turner's Graffiti: The Sun and Its Glosses") provides an excellent analysis of compositional semantics in Turner, but one which seems independent of his central thesis that visual and verbal structures are "incompatible" in Turner's painting. This incompatibility is demonstrated mainly with reference to the bifurcated nature of Turner criticism, which tends to see him either as a forerunner of modern abstractionism or as the last true classicist. But an equally plausible thesis would be that the "two Turners" are a creation of inadequate critical assumptions, and that it is our need to provide historicist labels like "classic" and "romantic" that makes Turner's achievement seem contradictory or paradoxical.

Whatever arguments we might wish to raise with particular essays in this volume, the main impression is one of rich, provocative variety. Any student of English Romantic literature who wishes to extend his work into the fine arts should consult this anthology, especially if his interest is in Turner. He will find haphazard illustrations (many paintings discussed in great detail in the text are not reproduced), a totally unreliable index (many recurrent proper names, such as Michelangelo and Thomas Gray, are not indexed at all, and other entries, such as John Howard, are incomplete). He will also find a stimulating collection of essays by some of the best scholars and critics now exploring the uncharted territories on the borders between Romantic painting and poetry.

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New World, New Earth: Environmental Reform in American Literature from the Puritans through Whitman by Cecelia Tichi. New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1979. Pp. xii + 290. $18.50.

In 1971 Cecelia Tichi published a remarkable essay in *William and Mary Quarterly*, "Spiritual biography and the 'Lords Remembrancers,'" on the unique tribal dimension in Puritan writings. The essay was reprinted in Sacvan Bercovitch's *American Puritan Imagination: Essays in Revaluation.* Now Tichi has written a bold but disappointing book arguing for the existence of a major social tradition in American literature: the fusion of calls for spiritual redemption with calls for environmental reform. Even her title, with its deliberate twist on the Biblical vision of "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21.1), presents the Puritan tradition as this-worldly, not other-worldly. The basic millennial thesis has been recently established by Bercovitch, who is more central to this study than Thoreau; Tichi's originality lies in applying the thesis to specific issues of environmental perception. Any readers who privately admit to being baffled by Bercovitch's abstruse doctrine can turn to this book for clear-headed uses written in readable, if repetitive, prose.

For Tichi the environmental reform tradition begins with the joining of metaphorical and literal perception in the "Christian militarism" of Edward Johnson's *Wonder-Working Providence* (a good chapter). It continues through Joel Barlow's "engineered millennium" in his *Columbiad*, along with a glance at Barlow's friend Robert Fulton, then divides into "celebratory" George Bancroft and "denunciatory" James Fenimore Cooper. After lumping Frederick Olmsted together with Edward Bellamy and too many others as Whitman's contemporaries, Tichi reaches the tradition's only aesthetic pinnacle: Whitman's "Song of the Broad-Axe," which at last unites the South's timeless Eden with the North's New Jerusalem. A secondary and more other-worldly strand begins with Bradford and Cotton Mather's *Theopolis Americana*, runs fitfully through Thoreau, and also ends in Whitman. Tichi grapples with the aesthetic inadequacies of so many of the works at hand; in fact her writing is most alive when she allows herself some negatives, especially on Barlow and Bancroft. Her case for Whitman's poem, while overstated, vigorously presents the poem's "birth" of a new world through a reformed imagination transcending the "programmatic" or "mimetic" minds of earlier writers.

Unfortunately the book's simple virtues, like those of her theme, avoid more complex problems. First, the tradition Tichi describes is simply *not* one of environmental reform, in the sense either of correcting man-made evils or more broadly of establishing ecological harmony for its own sake and ours. The "obsessive" American "imperative," as she says, is to impose an "a priori vision" of social perfection on the landscape. To call it reform, though catchy, is ahistorical and inaccurate. Worse, its positive connotations encourage her toward an indulgent cover-up of the tradition's tendency to legitimate material exploitation as spiritual development. Bancroft's "environmentally arrogant, insensitive, supremely anthropocentric" vision (p. 200) is typical, not idiosyncratic. Moreover, most of her writers show an intolerance amounting to snobbish or fearful contempt for plurality, diversity, and ordinary people in ordinary places. Cooper hated townspeople, Jedidiah Morse hated democracy, Freneau hated the Irish, Thoreau despised everybody. Even Crèvecoeur, more tolerant and therefore less central, hated frontiersmen. These ironies, like the irony of claiming for the height of American environmental consciousness a paean to an axe, are half exposed but not explored. At the very least her theme is closer to Ernest Lee Tuveson's *Redeemer Nation* than she would like.

A related problem is the book's undiscriminating tone. Tichi's discussion of Frederick Olmsted, for instance, allies his Central Park with what she calls the environmental reform tradition even as she shows him arguing for the reverse, that spiritual renewal follows from environmental improvement. Every other writer makes an improved world not the beginning but the end, an outgrowth of spiritual reform. It's no accident that Olmsted became a genuine reformer while the others were not. Another example: her epilogue claims that no writer after Whitman creates the New Earth in imaginative literature. Tichi blames this "collapse" on "the failure of the national imagination." It seems at least arguable that modernism means more than the Waste Land, that writers like Norman Mailer, Hart Crane, or William Carlos Williams (whom she briefly discusses) do partially identify themselves with the nation, and that in any case environmental reform doesn't require grandiose national selves. Leo Marx's *Machine in the Garden*, with its old-fashioned pastoral polarities, is much more subtle and sophisticated.

My major quarrel is really with Sacvan Bercovitch's thesis. Where she and he find a triumphant imaginative rhetoric compensating for social failure with a vision of social redemption, I see defensive grandiosity, a rescue fantasy of the Imperial Self designed to deny personal anxieties and social conflicts. Like Bercovitch, Tichi opens the door to private unease but doesn't walk through it. She notes private anxieties and fears of failure, especially in Barlow but also in Johnson, Cotton Mather, Freneau, and others. She comments on Thoreau's "dread" of actual wildness. Yet she doesn't pursue the connections, as Stephen Black has done for Whitman or Gordon Wood and Marvin Meyers have done for popular rhetoric. And why is the tradition so second-rate, except for Whitman? An environmental vision that deliberately avoids "topographical sight," people as they are, private tensions, social conflicts, and true wildness needs more probing questions. What kind of tradition is it whose only living legacy, by her own account, is Joel Barlow's word "utilize"?

Lesser quibbles abound. Tichi has a penchant for saying "ineluctable," "important," and even "importantly." Secondary scholarship is slim, except for predictable titles. Several chapters, e. g. on Cooper, are derivative. Tichi cites Annette Kolodny three times in the text but never in the notes, thus avoiding both the title and the thesis of *The Lay of the Land.* I noticed more than the usual number of missed references and glaring typos, of which my favorite is Bradford's "top of Pigsah" (p. 24); Yale Press has not served her well. *The Great Gatsby's* narrator is not Nick "Carroway" (p. 255). At least one Whitman quotation has a minor but unacknowledged omission, as does her transcription of Lawrence Buell's transcription of Bronson Alcott (p. 162). The list could go on.

New World, New Earth usefully calls attention again to The American Connection between landscape and millennium. Specialists will value the chapters on Johnson and Barlow, and perhaps the close reading of Whitman's poem. American Studies students may find it an accessible introduction to various infrequently considered texts, while frustrations with Tichi's overstated simplifications may even prompt a reconsideration of Bercovitch's thesis. But readers who want to see Tichi's mind at its best should look at her earlier essay.

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The American Jeremiad by Sacvan Bercovitch. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978. Pp. xvi + 239. $15.00.

Democracy and the Novel: Popular Resistance to Classic American Writers by Henry Nash Smith. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. Pp. viii + 204. $13.95.

Each of these studies measures its argument from the sturdy fact of the American middle-class. Sacvan Bercovitch traces the history of the American jeremiad over three centuries as it enlarged its audience, adapted its rhetoric to meet the crisis of the moment, and finally enabled middle-class Americans to chastise and congratulate themselves by means of a ritual that had repeatedly joined "social criticism to spiritual renewal, public to private identity." Henry Nash Smith attends to the manner in which our major nineteenth-century writers of fiction demurred from the "secular faith" underlying American popular culture. Bercovitch examines texts so that we may understand the protean appeal of the American jeremiad. Mr. Smith examines texts so that we may see how novelists questioned the reality which gave Americans an easy sense of confidence in themselves and in their future as a nation.

Expanding the argument of his earlier monograph, "Horologicals to Chronometricals: The Rhetoric of the Jeremiad" (1970), Bercovitch reminds us that the New England jeremiad was the product of the first emigrants. Crucial to his discussion is the idea that the Puritan "cries of declension and doom were part of a strategy designed to revitalize their errand," that "a promise of ultimate success," emerging from the traditional rhetoric of vengeance, became the signature of American jeremiads of whatever century. Inspired at first by the insecurity of the earliest settlers, the Puritan Jeremiad came (by the 1670's) to feed on crisis, on events–and they were never wanting–that enhanced the drama of the New England experience. And by the time of the second and third generation Puritans, a principle of *enlargement* had manifested itself, so that "the New World at large–not just New England but the entire continent–was destined for an errand in sacred history." It was precisely this capacity to evolve, to convert social and political problems to a rhetorical structure at once denunciatory and beguiling, that saw the jeremiad through the transition from Puritan New England to Yankee New England. The jeremiad survived "the failure of theocracy," Bercovitch demonstrates, because the Puritans had of necessity enlarged their vision to include basic American concerns that carried their own sense of urgency. If Cotton Mather's *Magnalia* epitomizes "the last stage in the growth" of the seventeenth century jeremiad, Jonathan Edwards' "effort to link regeneration to the destiny of the New World" sets the conditions by means of which the jeremiad could flourish anew in the cause of the American Revolution. Only this rhetorical form, concludes Bercovitch, as it "was developed from the Puritans through Edwards, could have sufficed for the occasion."

Facilitating the movement from "visible saint to American patriot," from "colony to republic to imperial power," the jeremiad provided an impetus for renewing the principles of revolution in the nineteenth-century. Quite rightly, Bercovitch discusses Fourth of July addresses as annual rituals in the jeremiad tradition. Indeed, these addresses support his argument even more forcefully than he has the opportunity to show: for the basic strategy of the Fourth of July address is to lament the injustice and manifold evils of the present day, then to say that if we will only rededicate ourselves to the ideals of the Founding Fathers and the Declaration of Independence the nation will yet realize its full and unique promise. The major writers of the American Renaissance, on the other hand, reveal "the pervasive impact" of the jeremiad in a different way. In their "divergence from 'popular culture,'" these writers simultaneously lament and celebrate the national dream to which they subscribe in frustration. Reaching beyond the categories of their culture, their classic works "are the most striking evidence we have" of the power and resilience of the American jeremiad.

It is at this point that the inquiry of *The American Jeremiad* intersects with that of *Democracy and the Novel.* For in what he presents as a "handful of essays," Henry Nash Smith investigates not so much the "Popular Resistance" to our classic writers promised in his sub-title as the "divergence" of major writer and mass culture to which we so often refer. As he concedes at the end of his opening chapter, Smith's investigations are preliminary, suggestive, the product of "hit-and-run" tactics. As one would expect, however, they are both provocative and useful, necessary steps toward a fuller understanding of the relationships of a writer's style and a writer's culture. Hawthorne's work, for example, subordinates "the outer world of institutions and observed behavior to the inner universe of private experience" and thus evokes a reality at odds with the extra-mental reality sanctioned (and assumed) by his society. In the figure of Captain Ahab, Melville presents an identity rooted in madness in an effort to express "an impulse originating below the threshold of his own consciousness." Some of the recurrent words of *Moby-Dick–ineffable, inexpressible, inexplicable, unimaginable*–suggest that Melville was reaching beyond the formulations of his culture, demanding by intensity of style that a reader confront matters ordinarily ignored by by a reading public committed to fantasies of assurance.

And that, of course, is why *Moby-Dick* had few readers and a novel like Henry Ward Beecher's *Norwood* (1867) had many. Smith's chapter on *Norwood* (a "textbook of the genteel tradition") makes the pieties of several generations critically and conceptually available in a compelling way. It also provides a context for his consideration of Howells, who challenged Beecheresque conventions but was unable to sustain a revolt against them. By analyzing closely ten passages from *A Modern Instance*, Smith distinguishes two conflicting styles in the narrative, one precise, assuming the moral complexity of the world, the other turgid and oratorical, informed by rigid moral categories. And the second style, he believes, ultimately restrained the possibilities of the first. One chapter on Mark Twain and two on Henry James complete *Democracy and the Novel*. Once again Smith is refreshing and lucid on *Huckleberry Finn* and *A Connecticut Yankee*; if a few of his observations seem second-hand, at least he has had the good sense to borrow from himself. The chapters on Henry James, however, have a different perspective than one finds in the rest of the book. Smith remains, as it were, on the outside looking in, first at the fortunes of James's career in the 1880's and 1890's, then at the image of the writer in "Greville Fane" and "The Next Time," and finally (in the last chapter) at reviews of James's work over a period of thirty years. One cannot argue with the value of such considerations; but they are different in kind from what Smith has done in his earlier chapters.

The argument of *The American Jeremiad* brings one to see the structure of a rhetorical form as a ritual enactment of the American temperament. Bercovitch conducts his study with care, rigor, and an exciting sweep that yields implications for all students of American literature and American culture. The analyses of *Democracy and the Novel* suggest ways of understanding the work of our classic writers of fiction in the context of the society in which they lived. Only a person with a wealth of experience and an enduring desire to begin could have written the essays in this book. It is to Smith's credit that, having accomplished so much, he now starts us, points us, goads us, in directions future scholarship will find rewarding.

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Time and the Novel: The Genealogical Imperative by Patricia Tobin. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978. Pp. xi + 235. $12.50.

It has now become a familiar notion that the repetitive nature of modernism's constitutive refusal of history is itself historical and problematical. Versions of "post-modernism" that are not themselves aware of that problem tend to become repetitions of the modernist denegation. The dilemma often finds expression in two strategies, each with its own varying degree of self-blindness. One strategy, of which I am perhaps guilty, is to adopt modernism as a way of reading, to see all texts as modern insofar as they are texts. I immodestly confess this anachronistic tendency, or bias even, at the outset to offer the reader some perspective on the following remarks about Patricia Tobin's book, which, it seems to me, succumbs to an opposite bias. Tobin's procedure is to measure the past—periods, actions, texts, whatever—by the supposedly enlightened ideas of the present. She grades the past, marking elements of sophistication or lapses into blind error, and delivers harsh judgment on the way it falls short of our advanced level of comprehension.

Tobin valuably extends Edward Said's analysis of the historical and metaphoric link between mimetic representation and biological engenderment, and between narrative structure and the dynastic, linear ordering of patriarchal descent. Said's insight was more subtly and carefully worked out as he demonstrated in *Beginnings* the progressive crossing back and disturbing of that link until the engendering author was subsumed by the logic of writing and biological continuity was increasingly pre-empted by the textual ordering which at first served as its metaphorical substitute. This imprisonment was, in his phrase, "the scriptive fate" of the modernist writer which one can now extrapolate as always already there in such novels as *Don Quixote*, *Tristram Shandy* or even *Bleak House* or *Middlemarch*. The history of the movement of that scriptive fate is thus made uncertainly the creation of the textual logic there from the beginning (the "always, already" there)—the originating author (or authority) becomes the creature of the text rather than its generator. History is thus made possible and cancelled out by the same textual movement. Tobin's line is simpler. She exaggerates the idea in a different way by offering her own genealogical history of the genealogical imperative, her own "irreversible moral progress"—the phrase she uses for the totalizing plot of certain "classical" novels.

In fact, her description of the novel of the genealogical imperative could too easily be applied to her own historical argument:

> Everything in the novels prepares us for the end—every word, gesture, detail, and episode is fraught with portent. When time is moralized as the primary ordering principle, interpretation is encouraged at every point, and because of the book's integrity, always rewarding. Even within a looser, more panoramic form, the traditional nineteenth-century novel reverberates with a moral thud at its culmination. (p. 33)

While her analysis of individual novels shows a fine awareness that the tyranny of the telos is just as absolute, just as much a part of the genealogical imperative, as the tyranny of the origin, her own historical scheme does not allow for that awareness. (The immediately evident problem with such progressive literary histories is to believe that the form moves, as Leslie Fiedler once noted, from the technical naivete of Hawthorne laboriously toward the heights reached by, say, William Dean Howells!) This history, then, for Tobin —a history of both social and literary forms, moves apparently from a primitive "before" when narrative was mythic, and society was natural, matriarchal—though non-hierarchical and free, through a patriarchal dynastic control in which the meaning and value of the individual person or discrete element are subordinated to the totalizing whole dominated by an enabling origin, finally to post-modernist fresh air, when narrative is freed from linearity and causality, eroticism breaks free of conjugal procreation, textual surface from the depths of romantic obscurity. The symbol is defeated and the literal is restored as the individual is restored to his or her implied "original" and "natural" status. Though Romanticism is for Tobin a deluded ideology, the romanticism of her own "post-modernism" should be self-evident. The description of an historical "before" and "after" would seem theoretically impossible, if not inconsistent with her own attempt to "deconstruct" the genealogical imperative.

The eighteenth-century novel then, in her history, is made up of "a merry troup" of texts which "appear irresponsibly playful or frivolously manipulative" next to *Clarissa* "whose offspring populate the nineteenth-century literary scene" and *Robinson Crusoe* whose hero "comes to represent the paternal principle in its purest personification." As for the others, "since [. . . their] protagonists are not expected to depart from their human nature given at the outset" and because the enabling fictions of a transcendent author or of a providential God guarantee their destiny, "the sequence and succession of their life events need have no causal significance." We can be safely delighted by "their generously muddled middles of erratic adventures, any of which could be substracted from these 'histories' without seriously affecting their final outcomes" and in which adventure can follow adventure in nicely haphazard order without regard to the strict paternal logic of cause and effect. This idea seems the old "rise of the novel" coarsened and thinly disguised as poet-modernism.

Except for such "precursors" of the "triumphantly primitive" post-modern novel as *Wuthering Heights*, *Pierre*, and *The Way of All Flesh*, the genealogical imperative reigns supreme in the structures of nineteenth-century novels. In *Wuthering Heights*, for example, the mythic yet anti-genealogical and erotic relationship between Cathy and Heathcliff makes unconvincing the genealogical substitution of the second Cathy and Hareton which is "meant" to conventionalize the narrative structure of the novel and submit it to genealogical order. Aside from some difficulties with this notion, Tobin's suggestions here and about *Pierre* and *The Way of All Flesh* are illuminating and interesting—Tobin is always better, often acutely and freshly perceptive, about texts with which she finds a deep affinity.

After what seems to me her least satisfyingly elaborated analysis, her treatment of the genealogically conservative *Buddenbrooks*, Tobin takes up the modern novels which successfully and structurally contest the genealogical imperative: *The Rainbow*, *Absalom, Absalom!*, *Ada, or Ardor*, and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. These admirably elaborated chapters seem to constitute the center of the book, its *raison d'être* and the ground for the shallow history that emcompasses them. Her enthusiasms here are well-argued, her analysis the most probing and most consistently cogent. There is occasional recourse to a kind of naive intentionalism and to romantic notions of the natural priority of the individual and of myth (as opposed to history, which apparently must, for Tobin, always and only be genealogical) and to unnecessary thwacks at the earlier novel, which make one wish that the analysis of these chapters had been extended even more and the historical generalizations dropped. She reads these novels closely and develops stylistic analysis into structural generalization in a striking way. Her studies of Nabokov and Garcia Marquez are useful and needed; her reading of the structural and thematic implications of the style, rhythm, and organization of Lawrence's novel is one of the best I've seen.

The oracular Tobin reaches a sort of stunning climax in the final chapter, "Wager on Surface" in which she speculates on the future of the novel and society. She offers some brief and perceptive remarks about recent novels, arguing for a return to the *literal* (mimetic and genealogical?) and to the erotics of the surface (a watered-down version of Susan Sontag's "Against Interpretation" and Barthes's *Pleasures of the Text*) as opposed to the patriarchally dominating Romantic symbol and the illusory depth of classical (most pre-postmodernist) literature. The book then ends on the uncertainty of whether current literature reflects a true liberation and return to the natural (for which she seems finally to opt in her "wager") or merely the breakdown of cultural order and a new consumerism dedicated to instant gratification.

The history of ideas that Tobin offers at the outset is valuable in its underlining of the importance of the genealogical metaphor and, though it (somewhat perfunctorily) cites such texts as Filmer's defense of patriarchal absolutism and Locke's refutation of it in his first *Treatise*, it does not pursue such lines far enough. The relationships between genealogical and patriarchalist assumptions, social order, and the emergence of historical ways of thinking have been explored a lot more than Tobin acknowledges. One thinks, for example, of J.G.A. Pocock's valuable *The Ancient Constitution and Feudal Law* and some his more recent work which extends his study into the English eighteenth-century, Peter Laslett's valuable introductions to his editions of Filmer and Locke, Isaac Kramnick on Bolingbroke, Gordon Schochet's *Patriarchalism in Political Thought: The Authoritarian Family and Political Speculation and Attitudes Especially in Seventeenth-Century England*, or even John Nelville Figgis' *The Divine Right of Kings.* What these works demonstrate is that the ideological basis of genealogical assumptions and the absolutist claims of the Stuarts which depended on those assumptions are already problematized *before* the eighteenth century and the problematization extends into and is made acute by the eighteenth century debates about the nature of history, of narrative (historical and fictional), of political authority in the war between Hanoverian ideologists and Jacobite supporters of Stuart restoration. The debate about genealogical authority and its relationship to narrative structure is much more overt in the novels of Fielding, Sterne, and Smollett than Tobin allows for. Also, the metaphoric relationship between temporal succession and cause and effect sequence is also more obviously problematic (in Hume, for example).

Moreover, the nineteenth-century novel much more openly probes and questions "the genealogical imperative" than Tobin presumes. Take, for example, Dickens' novels which both structurally and thematically raise questions about patrilineal or dynastic tyrannies (*Great Expectations*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *Our Mutual Friend*). Typically they begin with parallel and isolated groups, narratively move back and forth laterally in temporal slices, proving hidden relationships between apparently unrelated sets, and end with the creation of artificial families made up of orphans and outcasts, "cousins," who find some sort of haven outside of society. The disturbing relationship between repetition, doubling, substitution, fragmentation, simulation, and exchange or communication in Dickens' novels, or in *Wuthering Heights* for that matter, suggests more complex possibilities than can be accommodated by Tobin's linear pursuit of the simple line of genealogy. It is possible to read these novels as possibly subverting or deconstructing, but at the very least complicating, the genealogical assumptions, on which they are, in part, based. The old opposition between *the* novel and the ubiquitous anti-novel is now notoriously confused.

The problem is that Tobin's analysis turns into its own kind of imperative and, while she acknowledges practical criticism's perhaps inevitable dependence on genealogical assumptions, her own surrender to the metaphor is more profound and less ironic than she admits.

Recent critical theory has dwelt (perhaps too long) on the impossibilities of relating literature to history, but the project of turning the weapon of historical knowledge against itself is still a necessary one. As Tobin attempts to do this, she should be applauded. Aside from its brilliant analyses of individual texts, Tobin's book is valuable for the nature of the questions it raises and the arguing thought it provokes in the reader. We also owe it a debt of gratitude for the light it sheds on the relationship between narrative structure and a pervasive and too long taken-for-granted metaphor.

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Faulkner's Narrative Poetics: Style as Vision by Arthur F. Kinney. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978. Pp. xviii + 286. $15.00.

Faulkner's Career: An Internal Literary History by Gary Lee Stonum. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1979. Pp. 207. $12.50.

These two explorations of Faulkner's poetics proceed by quite different methodologies. Both emphasize Faulkner's intense epistemological concern in his novels, and the self-reflexive nature of his fiction. Kinney develops a context for his study in literary history but ends up focusing on the reader as the final shaper of each fiction. Stonum is involved with the author's own developing sense of a personal canon.

Kinney locates Faulkner within a modern tradition of novelists of consciousness, then explains his achievement as a writer demanding a dynamic process of reading. In the first half he traces a series of influences on Faulkner including

James, Flaubert, Balzac, Melville, Dostoyevsky, Conrad, Joyce, and Proust, but surprisingly not Mann. Each of the sections is too brief to be as useful as Kinney's recent study of Faulkner and Flaubert is. Many of the references to such figures as Arnheim, Braque, Ortega, Hellström, and Polanyi, moreover, seem gratuitous rather than functional. In the second half of his study Kinney argues that Faulkner appeals first to our "*structural consciousness*." We are then "helped to the meanings of Faulkner's novels by the pressures of their *narrative consciousness* on events." Most important, however, is "our *constitutive consciousness* as readers, the integrated sum of our awareness of the structure of the work and the perceptions of all the characters whose thoughts are explicitly or implicitly provided for us: the epistemological emphasis in Faulkner's narrative poetics is finally on the reader." Beneath the terminology and the thesis, however, lie rather conventional ways of approaching modern fiction—through image clusters, juxtaposition, analogous or parallel actions, unreliable narrators, multiple perspectives, and spatial form. Consequently the insights Kinney provides into works such as *The Sound and the Fury*, *Absalom, Absalom!*, and "The Bear"—those so fully worked over by other critics—are few. The value of the book lies in the critical commentary on novels such as *Flags in the Dust* and *Sanctuary*, and in the assimilation of much earlier Faulkner criticism into a coherent, if not original, consideration of Faulkner's narrative poetics. The book's limitations are most evident in Kinney's attempt at the end to explain Faulkner's decline. Because he has established neither sufficient distance from the author nor a methodology for explaining the reasons for the adoption or the success of these poetics, Kinney cannot *explain* the reasons for the decline. He can only *show* that the successful poetics no longer inform Faulkner's late fiction.

Stonum adopts as his model the literary career—the relation "between the texts a writer has already written and the writing of new texts. . . . Career as past output becomes an active force in shaping career as continuous production." To Stonum Faulkner's works take on much more coherence when each new major novel is perceived as an aesthetic or intellectual response to or extension of a previous book, usually a questioning of the enabling assumptions "on which the earlier work depends." As the key for opening up this intertextuality, this anxiety of internal influence, Stonum selects the concept of arrested motion, not as a consistent method throughout Faulkner's career—so frequently discussed by critics like Karl Zink, Olga Vickery, and Richard Adams—but a central concern whose significance keeps changing for Faulkner. At first it suggests a pure aesthetic state transcending life (the poetry). Since motion is the source of significance, "arrested motion" becomes, in Faulkner's "representational period," the only means by which art secures meaning out of reality (*As I Lay Dying*). Then as he questions the validity of fiction-making itself and puts the writer into the world of motion being considered, he tries "to arrest motion from within" (*Absalom, Absalom!*). Finally, as Faulkner understands art to be only one of many "cultural forms" that arrest motion, he develops an elegiac fiction as a meta-fiction for evaluating such codes, forms, and fictions (Snopes Trilogy).

Central to Stonum's model is the distance between subject and object in Faulkner's fiction. During his period of visionary romanticism in which arrested motion was a theme or goal rather than a method, Faulkner assumed a separate and autonomous writer who at least in art can be in quest for the absolute. Then he discovered the incompatibility of the absolute and consciousness, and the fact that the writer himself is an inseparable part of the "real world" he is transforming, that he therefore alters that which he sees merely by being there (Quentin Compson embodies Faulkner's recognition not only of the impossibility of arresting motion but of exerting control over motion, i. e. Caddy.). Design, therefore, became for Faulkner not just a goal but a theme. Whereas *As I Lay Dying* is "Faulkner's most sustained consideration of the theme of motion," *Absalom, Absalom!* is "his most sustained meditation on the activity of arresting." No longer is the writer's ability to represent characters' inner lives something to be assumed. Meaningful design, moreover, requires a prior establishment of a relationship to the raw material; but such a relationship, which makes forms and fictions possible, hardly allows for detachment. In fact Faulkner begins to question whether fictions, forms, and codes–which can have a restrictive and negative influence on individuals and identities–may themselves not be the villains, the corrupters, rather than the crass flux of materiality itself. In his final period Faulkner makes no further profound challenges to prior assumptions, but the gap between subject and object closes. He does develop in his final novels a meta-fiction that explores "the fate of design," that studies the consequences of customs, rituals, codes, patterns. The problem of values is central, because their existence depends on certain relationships of individuals and situations to cultural designs and perhaps discursive fictions. A central issue, even if not handled profoundly, becomes the relative worth of personal responsibility and public forms.

One of this book's merits is its new perspective on Faulkner's work as a whole. It explores in a new way the aesthetic implications of Faulkner's extreme, if typically modernistic, concern for epistemological issues in fiction, and the shifting nature of the self-reflexive qualities in that fiction. It shows that the relationships between a novel and its predecessors clarify the meanings of each. Stonum has read much current critical theory and has benefitted from it without being subservient to it. On the other hand, the book is built on a fragile framework. "Internal literary history" clearly means internal to the texts rather than the author. The model Stonum assumes for the choices a writer makes is dubious: are they all really so consciously planned as he implies? The Faulkner that emerges from this study, moreover, is a writer divorced from familial, social, economic concerns, bothered exclusively by aesthetic and epistemological issues, the validity of fiction as knowledge. These were crucial to him, but in a study of the author's sense of his own developing career as dynamic process, it seems questionable to divorce the writer from his most significant personal conflicts and social attitudes.

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